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### Why Parents Choose Dual Language Immersion Programs

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# WHY PARENTS CHOOSE DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS

By  
Darice Irby

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Gardner-Webb University School of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University  
2019

## Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Darice Irby under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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## **Abstract**

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School choice details a range of programs which offer families alternatives that are available to educate their children. Language immersion is a school choice option that is available for parents seeking to provide their children an innovative environment conducive for learning. This modality of learning uses dual languages to immerse students completely within the subject being taught. This qualitative design study sought to investigate why parents choose to send their child to a dual language immersion school. This study examined parent motivations and decision-making processes for choosing dual language immersion programs. This study also investigated parents' own school experiences and how parents perceive their role and responsibilities in their children's educational development. This study included 19 parents of students attending CAF Elementary School, a Title I K-5 Spanish dual language immersion program located in the 10<sup>th</sup> largest school district in North Carolina's south central piedmont region. Findings from this study revealed parents choose dual language immersion programs because they want their children to have an advantage academically, socially, and culturally. They believe it will lend to success with postsecondary academic and occupational opportunities. This study added to the existing body of language immersion research by illustrating participant's views, expectations, and beliefs about the Spanish immersion program.

*Keywords:* school choice, dual language immersion, elementary school, title I, bilingualism

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Academic performance achieved across American public schools indicates critical disparities among student readiness and global competitiveness (Honda, 2010). “The United States’ failure to educate its students leaves them unprepared to compete and threatens the country’s ability to thrive in a global economy” (Hanushek, Peterson, & Woessmann, 2012, p. 1).

By the year 2000, the United States public school system was facing a reality of education crisis. The country was falling behind its international peers, and a fifty-year effort to end racial disparities in school achievement had made little progress. (Peterson, 2016, p. 1).

In 2011, only 6% of United States students were performing competitively at the advanced level in math to that of their international peers from 30 other countries (Hanushek et al., 2012). Only 32% of eighth graders in the United States demonstrated proficiency in math ranking the United States 32<sup>nd</sup> among participating international jurisdictions (Hanushek et al., 2012).

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results indicated that American students specifically held a 113-point gap in math and literacy between the number one spot-holder Shanghai-China, showing an equivalence of more than 2 years of schooling (Honda, 2010). Although school systems across the globe are challenged with meeting the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as serving students who are categorized in low socioeconomic status, single parent households, or foreign-born parents, the top PISA performers, Canada and China, managed to still provide an equitable, high-quality education to each child attending their schools and have



demonstrated the power of setting high expectations using innovative practices for all students (Honda, 2010). Further, Canada and China have allocated funds toward instructional resources, teachers, and leaders to help students meet these high expectations, regardless of their family background or geographic location (Honda, 2010).

Due to the dismay and dissatisfaction of academic inequity, constituents across the country look towards the federal government for solutions (Peterson, 2016). According to historical educational legislation, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, was intended to win the war on poverty and narrow achievement gaps among subgroups across American schools (Education Law Consortium, 2016). The ESEA authorized funds for professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and parental involvement promotion. The ESEA was originally authorized through 1965; however, the government has reauthorized the act every 5 years since its enactment (Education Law Consortium, 2016). At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama, the first two presidents of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, tackled challenges facing the quality and advancement of American public school education systems. Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) signed by President George W. Bush, Congress reauthorized the ESEA to include Title I provisions that directly impacted disadvantaged students (Education Law Consortium, 2016). This action created the nation's first reform-based federal regulatory regime in education (Peterson, 2016). In 2015, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which builds on progress made from NCLB in efforts of narrowing the

achievement gaps by placing high academic standards for schools to uphold, increasing high school graduation rates, and decreasing school dropout rates (Education Law Consortium, 2016). For the first time in history, this act requires that all students attending American schools receive a high quality education that will prepare them for college and career opportunities (Education Law Consortium, 2016).

Butcher (2013) highlighted concerns regarding top agenda items of policy makers and the notion of giving parents real power over the destiny of educating their own child. This assertion confirms the argument that parents desire to ensure their child attends an institution that delivers high quality instruction. Researchers lament that parents seek alternative methods to meet the academic needs of students caused by pressures facing American public schools from educational legislation and the establishment of increased charter schools (Peterson, 2016).

In 2007, a new nationwide poll of registered voters revealed an overwhelming concern in regard to the U.S. public school system's shortfalls for preparing students with the skills needed to compete in a global economy ("Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning," 2017). Public Opinion Strategies and Peter D. Hart Research Associates conducted a survey on behalf of Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills ("Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning," 2017). Eighty percent of participants surveyed agreed that skills needed to compete today such as problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and self-direction are different from what was needed 20 years ago and should be included at higher rates in the American public school curriculum ("Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning," 2017). Sixty-six percent of participants emphasized that students need to improve soft skills such as leadership, empathy, and relationship building ("Partnership

for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning,” 2017). Fifty-three percent stated that American public schools should place equal emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> century and soft skills as both are needed to obtain and maintain employment (“Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning,” 2017). “We need to expand what our schools are teaching to keep pace with our modern work force,” stated Bill McInturf, Executive of Public Opinions Strategies (“Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning,” 2017, p. 1). Geoffrey Garin, executive for Peter D. Hart Research Associates, lends remarks regarding poll results by stating, “The loud and clear message from this poll is that Americans recognize the need for our schools to help our students regain their competitive advantage in a quickly changing world” (“Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning,” 2017, p. 1). To close the achievement and the global competition gap, U.S. schools must make education relevant and provide all students with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning opportunities (“Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning,” 2017).

Hanushek, Lastra-Anadon, Peterson, and Woessmann (2011) argued, “The challenge in U.S. schools is particularly great in math, science, and engineering” (p. 1). U.S. public schools are not generating enough innovators which lends to a deprived K-12 teaching system and a culture that lacks the attention and value of engineering and science (Hanushek et al., 2011). In 2015, findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed approximately one third of American high school seniors are ready for college-level coursework in math and reading (Camera, 2016). Although students achieving above mastery have slightly increased in reading, students achieving below grade level are lacking in performance more than ever before (Camera, 2016). These findings are originated from a sample of 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students from 740 public and private schools (Camera, 2016). The evaluation informs that only 37% of

students are ready for college-level math and reading which is a 2% decrease in math and 1% decrease in reading since the last assessment was administered in 2013 (Camera, 2016).

“A global education is a necessity of which we cannot afford to be without” (Berdan, 2014, p. 1). Berdan (2014) stated that American schools are not doing enough to infuse global learning with their education system. The collective employment needs of American businesses rely on the country’s long-term economic strengths (Berdan, 2014). American businesses need more internationally savvy and capable employees to be successful in this evolving interconnected world (Berdan, 2014). “It is not enough that American public schools graduate students who can read, write and are proficient in math and science in accordance with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) mandates” (Berdan, 2014, p. 1). American public schools need to graduate readily employable students who are globally minded, cross-culturally competent, and ideally able to speak another language other than English (Berdan, 2014).

Only 16 states in America offer a foreign language requirement for graduation with most instruction not beginning until high school, which is when research shows the ability to learn a foreign language begins to decline (Berdan, 2014). Foreign language should be infused in the K-12 curriculum with other core subjects starting in elementary school (Berdan, 2014). Many college programs offering foreign language requirements express continued concern regarding the lack of proficiency demonstrated by American students which are needed to build toward fluency in 4 years (Berdan, 2012). American business leaders are looking to hire foreign nationals at higher rates, as American students lack skills needed to function in a globally competent workforce (Berdan, 2012).

In 2013, the Asian Society mapped every county in America illustrating nearly 1 million data points to demonstrate how every county in America is linked to the rest of the world in cultural origins, languages spoken, and economic integration (Berdan, 2014). The online tool “Mapping the Nation: Linking Local to Global” was used to gather qualitative data which found 23 million American jobs directly linked to international trade in every state in the Union, along the coasts and northern and southern borders (Berdan, 2014). This information contributes to multiple evidences which confirms an urgent need for American schools to better prepare students for success in a universal society.

### **Purpose of Study**

School choice describes a variation of programs which offers families alternatives that are available to educate their children. According to McShane (2014), there are multiple school choice programs available for parent selection with some being far more advanced than others. Charter schools or school voucher programs are traditional forms of school choice, as these institutions are free and public (McShane, 2014). Private schooling requires families to pay tuition fees. “Choice by real estate” occurs when a family purchases residential property that is coincidentally zoned for a high quality public school (McShane, 2014). According to a Realtor.com survey administered in July 2013, 20 million of 5.2 million of the nation’s students will attend private schools, and over 60% of homebuyers rank school district boundaries as a factor in their home buying decision, boosting property values up to 16% (McShane, 2014). Additional forms of school choice options are called intra-district, which allows parents to select lottery or open enrollment magnet school programs stationed across the attended school district

(McShane, 2014). Intra-district options are found to alleviate segregation concerns and/or offer parents an alternative selection to a failing school (McShane, 2014).

The Wall Street Journal coined the year 2011 as “the year of school choice,” and “the best for reformers in a very long time” (Butcher, 2013, p. 1). Thirteen states during the year 2011 launched new programs providing kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students with options to select schools in public or private sector as opposed to attending their assigned traditional school (Butcher, 2013). With so much parent interest shifting toward innovative programs for their child, school choice quickly became a headline of the school reform debate (Butcher, 2013).

There are various themes offered through school choice programs. Science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) programs offer an academic focus in these categories (Eger, 2012). Blended learning programs are designed to place “student control over the pace of learning” (Jacobs, 2014, p. 1) by providing a differentiated approach to schooling while using a technology device. The Montessori model provides hands-on learning and real-world application (Shaw, 2012). Coding programs require students to create websites and apps while instilling increased skills for systematic thinking and logical decision-making (Contributer, 2017). Dual language immersion programs are offered as a choice option for multiple school districts across the United States. Dual language immersion programs promote academic achievement for English learners and immerse native speaking English students in a foreign language (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008).

In 2011, Dr. Harrison, Chairman of the North Carolina Board of Education, developed a task force of five internal members of the North Carolina state board to

conduct research and gather input from residents ranging from educators, business representatives, college professors, community partners, and international experts to strengthen ongoing reform of the state's public school system (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2014). Dr. Harrison mentioned, "The scope of this aggressive agenda is to implement statewide initiatives designed to ensure graduates are globally competitive in a national economy" (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017b, p. 8). The North Carolina Board of Education has committed to improving college and career ready standards, Teacher and Principal Evaluations, Longitudinal Data Systems, District and School Transformation, Early College High Schools, NC STEM Learning Network, North Carolina Virtual Public School, Instructional Improvement Systems, and Early Literacy Interventions (North Carolina Department of Instruction, 2017b). Since the launching of these initiatives, the percentage of students achieving at or above grade level in third through eighth grade averages 67.5%, an increase of 3.6% since retest results were initially considered in annual 2008-2009 data (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017b). The high school 4-year graduation rate is now 80.4%, an increase from 68.3% in 2006 (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017b, p. 9).

Bilingual education and native language instruction has an extensive history alongside schooling in the United States (Crawford, 1992). Communities in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century began to bring children together in large numbers for the purpose of educating them (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The implementation of this model brought along children who spoke languages other than English; for example, French in Louisiana, German and Dutch in Pennsylvania, and Spanish and German in Texas (Blanton, 2005). During this

time, the use of multiple languages for communication and education was not accepted; moreover, many Indigenous, Asian, and Mexican American communities found that their languages were systematically isolated and depreciated (De Jong, 2013).

During the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mandates of speaking English as the one and only language of American national identity emerged as a massive rush of immigrants from non-English speaking parts of Europe arrived to the United States (Pavlenko, 2002). Policy makers implemented new restrictive immigration systems with the development of free and compulsory schooling in the U.S. (Pavlenko, 2002). The purpose of these policies was to “Americanize” students in efforts to integrate immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe (Schmid, 2000, p. 67). Garcia (2005) described how, for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the resistance to non-English speaking immigrants and the push to “Americanize” U.S. schools contributed to challenges stemmed from the “English-only” language ideologies (p. 29). Many immigrants continued to speak their native language in their communities, despite U.S. policies that perpetuated restrictive environments (Garcia, 2005).

According to Blanton (2005), The Bilingual Education Act, 1968 brought about major shifts in tolerance toward bilingual education; however, funding for bilingual education programs were negatively viewed which impacted the development of bilingual students. The U.S. Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) announced that educators were required to provide “affirmative remedial efforts to give special attention to linguistically deprived children” (p. 5). This decree forced schools to address bilingual populations in unique ways (Gándara, Moran, & Garcia, 2004).

Dual language immersion programs are referred to as the best models to educate



minority students and develop bilingualism in native English speaking students (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2005). Collier and Thomas (2004) informed that enrichment dual language instruction narrows the academic achievement gap for all subgroups of students to include students who are achieving below grade level in their first and second language. The goal is for minority and majority populations to graduate fully bilingual and excel at high levels of academic success in both languages (Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001). Studies have noted success with fifth grade dual language students achieving high levels of performance on oral language, reading, and writing measures administered in the English and Spanish languages (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003).

There are two models cited in the article “Dueling models of dual language instruction: A critical review of the Literature and Program:” (a) dual maintenance bilingual education for language minority students and (b) dual or two-way immersion programs that serve language majority and language minority together in the same room (Mora et al., 2001). Mora et al. (2001) explored a continuum of which language programs align in range of theoretical approaches in dual language education using the compensatory or enrichment model. The compensatory model is designed to ameliorate language barriers that exist, impeding language minority students from accessing their curriculum. The enrichment model is designed to provide students with an opportunity of attaining high levels of academic achievement resulting in advanced readiness for increased postsecondary opportunities of career choices impacting economic increase (Mora et al., 2001). The ultimate goal for native English speaking students is to attain proficiency with the acquisition of learning a foreign language.

There are increased cognitive benefits for bilingual students. Research suggests that “People who speak two languages may have brains that are more efficient at language processing and other tasks” (Lewis, 2014, p. 1). Bensen (2013) noted that children who learn a foreign language have an increased capacity to process sounds. They are more likely to pay attention in a learning situation and have reduced levels of anxiety, loneliness and poor self-esteem (Bensen, 2013). They are also able to demonstrate higher levels of cognitive flexibility, or the ability to change responses based on environment and circumstances (Lynch, 2014). This includes brain activity and flexibility correlating with mathematics, problem-solving, logic, and memory (Bensen, 2013).

Employment rates are higher for bilingual professionals as the development of this skill is key to competing in a global economy. “The demand for foreign language proficiency is now at 630,000, a huge jump from 240,000 open positions for candidates with bilingual abilities in 2010” (McMunn, 2017, para 3). “This trend will only continue despite the recent misguided shifts towards nationalism in the US and abroad” (McMunn, 2017, para 3). Being bilingual provides professionals a competitive advantage over monolingual professionals with over 31,000 entities actively recruiting individuals that are bilingual in Spanish (Cummings, 2012). Bilingual professionals earn an average of 5-20% more per hour than monolingual professionals (Cummings, 2012). A recent poll was conducted to measure recruiters’ language preference for jobs in the United States. Seventy-nine percent of recruiters overwhelmingly chose Spanish, 43% selected French, and 30% selected Mandarin Chinese (Cummings, 2012). There are multiple initiatives implemented by the U.S. government to promote bilingualism in the military, civil, and

foreign service, including foreign language proficiency bonuses (Cummings, 2012).

Interpreter and translator occupations are estimated to increase in demand by 42% in the next 10 years (Cummings, 2012). These numbers reflect the competitive edge of having foreign language knowledge (Cummings, 2012).

Children who are bilingual adapt to new environments quickly due to routine exposure to integrating with students from different backgrounds (Lynch, 2014). This soft skill is needed to build respectful relationships with peers. Dual language programs expand students' cultural perspectives which may lead to greater opportunities for collaborative learning (Lynch, 2014).

All K-12 students should be taught a second language at a young age in order to be fluent by graduation (Lynch, 2014). Bilingual skills improve student preparedness for college and global market employment opportunities. Eighty-eight percent of members from second generation immigrants who were introduced to English at an early age identified as strong English speakers and are advancing academically and in various public and private sectors around the world (Lynch, 2014). By implementing bilingual options at developmental ages, K-12 students stand to benefit long term, both academically and in life (Lynch, 2014).

Based on these benefits and more, the purpose of this study was to investigate why parents select the option of sending their child to an institution that offers dual language immersion programs.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the motivations for parents to enroll their child in a dual language immersion program?

2. What are the stated factors that influence immersion parents' decision-making?

### **Significance of Study**

Sound research supports multiple advantages with enhancing literacy skills for non-English and native English speakers enrolled in dual language immersion programs. These programs routinely align to similar models where both groups are integrated for instruction serving in roles representing language(s) primarily taught and/or serving as the language learner (Yang Su, 2013). Additionally, these programs are facilitated in many variations which determine the amount of language acquisition in which students are immersed throughout the instructional day such as 100%, 50/50%, and 90/10% (Yang Su, 2013). Although there is an abundance of research to support dual language immersion models and variations, there is limited fieldwork providing insight regarding the impact parent involvement has toward the success and sustainment of these programs.

Parents who are involved in their child's education lend to the improvement of student overall learning and development (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005). Researchers have concluded that parental beliefs such as increased cognitive benefits, higher employment rates upon graduating high school, and enhanced cultural competency skills often influence these involvement decisions (Lewis, 2014; Lynch, 2014; McMunn, 2017). Dual language immersion programs, which are often school choice options, depend heavily on parent sponsorship which serves as a critical component toward the overall success of these programs. Qualitative and quantitative data from this study will inform researchers, policy makers, and school district leaders on parental ambition, views, and beliefs that can be used toward planning, proposing,

implementing, and sustaining dual language programs. Further, this data may be used as baseline targeting areas that will improve parent and community sponsorship and student participation. This is why additional research is needed to investigate parent ambition and decision-making processes when selecting dual language immersion programs as a primary option to educate their children.

### **Context of Study**

This study includes parents of students attending CAF Elementary School, a Title I K-5 Spanish dual language immersion program located in the 10<sup>th</sup> largest school district in North Carolina's south central piedmont region. CAF Elementary launched the Spanish immersion program during the 2013-2014 school year and is the first Spanish language immersion program in its school district. This program serves a total of 407 kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Academic instruction is aligned with North Carolina Standard Course of Study curriculum. Exposure to partner language is based on a 50/50 model where students are taught academics 50% of the day in Spanish and 50% of the day in English. There are no enrollment requirements for the Spanish immersion program at CAF. Parents of the CAF community and three additional attendance zones are allowed to bring their child for dual language immersion participation and are provided the option to choose this program to enroll their children. CAF Elementary also provides parents the choice of enrolling their children in the traditional academic program which serves 373 students and is taught solely in the English language.

### **Terms and Definitions**

#### **Charter schools.**

Public schools of choice that are sanctioned by the State Board of Education and

managed by independent non-profit boards of directors and are primarily funded by state and local tax dollars. Charter schools facilitate open enrollment and cannot discriminate in admissions, associate with any religion or religious group, or charge-tuition. Charter schools operate with autonomy from many of the regulations that govern district schools, however; are held liable through the State assessment and accountability system (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017a, p. 1)

**Dual language immersion.** “English proficient students receive instruction in English and in a second language throughout the day” (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 3).

**Dual language immersion program 50/50 model.**

In the 50-50 model, all students learn in their primary and secondary language 50% of the school day. This model is conducive for programs with limited bilingual teachers, which enables the bilingual teacher time to teach students on a half-day rotation. (Gomez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005, p. 149)

**Dual language immersion program 90/10 model.** “In the 90/10 model, all students receive primary instruction in the second language for 10% of the school day and 90% in their secondary language” (Gomez et al., 2005, p. 149).

**Dual or two-way immersion.** “Designed to blend English speakers and non-native speakers in the same setting, to allow everyone to learn a second language” (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 6).

**English language learners (ELL).** “Students who do not speak English, but reside in an English Speaking country” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction,

2014, p. 1).

**Global competitiveness.** “High school graduates that are prepared to enter occupational markets equipped with communication, analytical and technical skills that span international borders” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2014, p. 1).

**Language acquisition.** “The study of language acquisition examines how people acquire language in different settings” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2014, p. 1).

**NCLB.** “Holds states and schools accountable for increasing the performance of certain groups of students, such as English-language learners (ELLs), students in special education (SPED), and poor and minority children, whose achievement, on average, trails their peers” (Education Law Consortium, 2016, p. 1)

**One-way immersion program.** “A program that serves native speaking students of the partner language, such as Spanish” (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 7).

**Partner language.** “A language of which is spoken by language minority speaking students” (Gomez et al., 2005, p. 149).

### **Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).**

An international assessment that quantifies 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy every three years and includes metrics of general or cross-curricular competencies, such as collaborative problem-solving. This assessment underlines functional skills that students have obtained as they near the end of compulsory schooling. (Honda, 2010, p. 1)

## **Overview**

In Chapter 2, a review of literature details the history of bilingual education in the

United States and American public schools, models of dual language immersion programs, the benefits of bilingual education, and why parents select dual language immersion programs as a primary source for their children's education.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology as it correlates with the research. This chapter features methods used to conduct the study, metrics to measure reliability, and the researcher's intent for desired outcomes. This chapter also details how data are collected, displayed, and analyzed.

Chapter 4 presents the results from the study. Qualitative data presented in this section are disaggregated by question stems, participant responses, and results.

Finally, in Chapter 5, a review of the framework used throughout the analysis is presented along with a summary of findings and recommendations from this study.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **History of Bilingual Education in the United States**

Bilingual education in the United States has been a challenge for foreign students needing academic supports to improve learning. The concept of educating students primarily fluent in foreign languages and reared in foreign countries has woven into the contexts of American history, politics, social, and economic structures (Ovando, 2003). During World War II and later the Cold War, the United States' insufficiencies in foreign-language instruction served as a caution to the government due to the need of core language skills in math and science in the national defense agenda for military, commercial, and diplomatic affairs (Ovando, 2003).

On October 4, 1957, Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite, was placed in orbit by the former Soviet Union (Ovando, 2003). This satellite shocked the world as the distinction of putting the first man-made object in space was successfully accomplished ("Sputnik 1," 2017). In 1958, The National Defense Education Act was sanctioned with guidelines that drove federal foreign language policies in math and science in response to the launching of Sputnik (Ovando, 2003). The primary goal for this act was to elevate the level of foreign language education in the United States by granting associations to aspiring foreign language teachers (Ovando, 2003). Although the National Defense Education Act improved educational programs for foreign learners, it lacked effective structures and funding needed to perpetuate successful program outcomes (Ovando, 2003).

In 1959, displaced Cubans arrived in Florida to escape Fidel Castro's Cuban Revolution (Ovando, 2003). In 1963, the Cuban community established a successful

two-way bilingual immersion program at Coral Way Elementary School in Dade County, Florida (Ovando, 2003). This program facilitated instruction in the Spanish and English language with parental support for their children to maintain the Spanish language and Cuban culture in preparation for their eventual return to Cuba (Ovando, 2003). This program's success promoted supportive roles of professional Cuban parents, well-trained Cuban teachers, and federal assistance through the Cuban Refugee Act of 1960 signed by President Eisenhower (Ovando, 2003). The bilingual program at Coral Way accelerated other bilingual immersion programs in Florida and other parts of the country (Ovando, 2003). The majority of these programs were developed and funded locally and also facilitated both the Spanish and English languages (Ovando, 2003).

In the early 1960s, calls were made to reform the United States immigration policies. Linguistic diversity began to shift, and the birth of the civil rights movement commenced ("U.S. Immigration Since 1965," 2010). The implementation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act led to the development of the Office of Civil Rights ("U.S. Immigration Since 1965," 2010). During this time, immigration was based on the national origins quota system that was put into place in the 1920s ("U.S. Immigration Since 1965," 2010). Each nationality was represented in past U.S. census figures and assigned a quota based on its representation ("U.S. Immigration Since 1965," 2010). The civil rights movement's message of equal treatment regardless of race or nationality influenced constituents to perceive the quota system as backward discrimination ("U.S. Immigration Since 1965," 2010).

President John F. Kennedy took on the immigration reform cause, and in June 1963 gave a speech of "intolerance" in support of this cause ("U.S. Immigration Since

1965,” 2010). The Naturalization Act of 1965 was passed after the assassination of John F. Kennedy and was heavily supported by his brother, Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts (“U.S. Immigration Since 1965,” 2010). After the 1965 Immigration Act was signed into law, Asian and Latin Americans began to enter the country in large numbers (“U.S. Immigration Since 1965,” 2010). More language-minority students from these regions attended U.S. schools, increasing the need of bilingual instruction across the country (Ovando, 2003).

In 1968, Congress enacted the Bilingual Education Act which was an amendment to Title VII of the ESEA that was originally signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). On January 2, 1968, the Bilingual Education Act Section 702 was the first United States federal legislation sanctioned by the 90<sup>th</sup> United States Congress and was the first United States federal legislation passed to identify the needs of limited English speaking students (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). School districts serving high populations of low-income children with the goal of establishing native language instruction were enabled to fund professional development training for staff and purchase resources and materials to use for program development and research (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). These grants were based on a voluntary basis and districts were given autonomy on program structures and implementation (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018).

Although the Bilingual Education Act has been amended several times since 1968, some of the most substantial amendments were enacted in 1974. Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) influenced amendments to the Bilingual Education Act (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). This case was originated by Chinese students

attending public schools in San Francisco and brought to trial due to low academic performance (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). Because these students were also limited English proficient, the case arguably supported the notion of them receiving an inadequate education (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the students, noting, “equal educational opportunity consisted of more than just equal educational treatment” (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018, para. 3). The 1974 amendments resolved program goals, more clearly defined bilingual education agendas, helped to establish local support centers, and provided funding for efforts to develop the timetable for curricula, staff, and research (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). The amended act provided new grants for English and native language instruction allowing opportunities for students to effectively navigate through the educational system (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). Professional development opportunities for teachers and a platform to disseminate information were also provided through the amended act (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018). The criterion that only low-income students can qualify as beneficiaries was removed (“Bilingual Education Act,” 2018).

Throughout the 1980s, interests with incorporating bilingual education heightened with great challenge to the prior 20 years of legislative progress and research (Crawford, 1999). William Bennet, President Reagan’s Secretary of Education, confronted Title VII restrictions in an effort to eliminate support to improve bilingual education efforts and maintain English-only alternative programs (Crawford, 1999). In 1984, the revision and reauthorization of Title VII, ESEA, was motioned with emphasis on the transition to English only in lieu of improving both the foreign and English languages (Ramsey, 2012). In 1988, school programs received a 4% increase to fund English-only alternative

programs that did not exceed \$140,000 from grants that were available to fund bilingual programs (Crawford, 1999). This transference was indicative of the ongoing political resistance toward educating students who primarily speak a foreign language (Crawford, 1999).

In 1997, the first two-way dual language program designed to educate English learners and native English speakers was launched in Charlotte, North Carolina at Collinswood Elementary School (Maxwell, 2015). The state of North Carolina has demonstrated commitment to pushing a broad strategic plan for promoting global education by improving and expanding dual-language programs (Maxwell, 2015). “With collaborative support from the state governor, NCDPI Foreign Language Department and ESL offices, NCDPI is set to launch at least one kindergarten through twelfth-grade Dual Language Immersion program for each of the 115 districts” (Collier & Thomas, 2012, p. 66). Collier and Thomas (2012) reported this initiative would be achieved by collaborating with higher learning institutions to develop a cohort of bilingual, biliterate educators and would be funded by the approval of the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. “The FLAP grant provides financial capital that will enable school districts throughout the state to implement bilingual immersion programs, guidelines, professional development training for teachers and consistent implementation criteria for native English speakers” (Collier & Thomas, 2012, p. 66).

In 1998, Proposition 227 won votes from English-only groups residing in the state of California (Purcell, 2002). This proposition prohibited bilingual instruction and supported the ideology of bilingual instruction as a “costly experimental language

program whose failure over the past two decades was demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children” (Purcell, 2002, p. 18). This law ordered English-language learners to be educated in sheltered English immersion classes for 1 year prior to being transferred to regular English-only classrooms (Purcell, 2002). After the passing of Proposition 227, constituents residing in the state of Arizona voted for similar legislation but with stiff regulations and minor loopholes (Parrish et al., 2006).

In the state of California, a 5-year extensive study was conducted on the long-term effects of Proposition 227 during the year 2000 (Parrish et al., 2006). Multiple academic subjects were used to measure proficiency levels of approximately 600,000 ELL students (Parrish et al., 2006). Findings from the study concluded that ELL students in California schools made some academic gains; however, there were continued discrepancies in performance between ELLs and native English speakers (Parrish et al., 2006). Due to the lack of disaggregating measures needed to identify achievement outcomes from individual students, researchers determined English immersion, compared to bilingual education, noneffective for this study (Parrish et al., 2006).

On November 7, 2000, “English for the Children,” also known as Proposition 203, passed in the state of Arizona (Parrish et al., 2006). Many bilingual programs ended in the state of Arizona due to this proposition; however, some school districts found ways to circumvent the law and continued to offer bilingual programs (Crawford, 2000). Massachusetts voters were provided preference to end bilingual education in accordance with Question 2 of the proposition, which was illustrated on the 2002 ballot (Kim, Hutchison, & Winsler, 2015). This action ended bilingual programs and required ELL

students to receive language support instruction for a 1-year period prior to transitioning into all-English classrooms (Kim et al., 2015).

In 2001, NCLB was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002 (NCLB, 2002). A noteworthy revision of ESEA under Title III of this reauthorization defined the federal policy regarding English-language learning (NCLB, 2002).

NCLB only focused on ensuring that “students who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet. (Wright, 2009, p. 1)

The style of bilingual education offered to ELLs and ideologies that support the effectiveness of bilingual education in general have encountered much progression in recent decades (Kim et al., 2015). During 2016 elections, the state of California’s legislature passed Proposition 58 (“English Language Education,” 2013). This proposition superseded the required English-only education for English learners as mandated under proposition 227 (“English Language Education,” 2013). Proposition 58 allows schools to implement numerous bilingual education programs (“English Language Education,” 2013). In these programs, students learn from teachers who speak both their native language and the English language (“English Language Education,” 2013). Noted in the proposition, parents will be instrumental with providing input each school year in terms of sustaining or developing improved programs conducive to enhancing student learning and development (“English Language Education,” 2013). If requested by

enough parents, schools will be required to offer specific English learner programs (“English Language Education,” 2013). School districts and county offices of education are required to gather annual feedback regarding English learner programs from parents and community members (“English Language Education,” 2013). Proposition 58 also terminated parental waivers that were previously enforced for students to take non-English-only classes (“English Language Education,” 2013).

The state of North Carolina has made continued progression toward meeting the global need to integrate bilingual education programs. During the past 2 decades, immigrants from Mexico and Central America moved throughout the state (Collier & Thomas, 2012). “Approximately 154,000 Mexican immigrants residing in the state as of 2011 totaled in number of English learners representing 240 languages other than English with Spanish being the most common language spoken” (Collier & Thomas, 2012, p. 65). “Due to the arrival of foreign populations, the NCDPI implemented intensive Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training for ESL and General Education Teachers across multiple school districts” (Collier & Thomas, 2012, p. 65).

Currently, advocates of bilingual education across the United States have supported and facilitated increased comprehensive teaching approaches to demonstrate that bilingual education is effective and has positive benefits for children.

### **Dual Language Immersion Program Models**

Dual language immersion is an approach to teaching a second language in which the target language is used as both curriculum content and medium of instruction (Baker, 2006).

English-speaking students enrolled in a French immersion program is an example



of this innovative modality of learning that is used to prepare students for global competitiveness after receiving a high school diploma. Dual language immersion program models serves in several capacities of learning. (Mora et al., 2001, p. 438)

An academic model of dual language immersion represents assertions regarding program goals and objectives, program implementation, and assessment plan (Mora et al., 2001). This model is grounded on philosophical assumptions and pedagogical principles that are communicated into a logical and sustained development of instructional activities resulting in attainment of target program goals (Mora et al., 2001). Language immersion instruction is a theoretical model that explicitly promotes the value of bilingualism, biliteracy and multiculturalism (Mora et al., 2001). Dual language immersion models are enlarged and specifically launched as a result of collaborative decisions around teacher qualifications, student groupings, language teaching methods, and the scope and sequence of academic content (Mora et al., 2001). To ensure an effective dual language immersion program, Mora et al. (2001) listed the following characteristics:

1. The demographic realities and resources of the community must correlate with a pedagogically based model of instruction.
2. Instruction in all entities of the program must be implemented with fidelity.
3. Measures of assessment and progress monitoring used to meet the needs of the demographics must be addressed appropriately and in a timely manner and with commitment (p. 445).

As students advance academically, balance and quality of the program is met by conducting routine assessment practices and adjustments (Mora et al., 2001).

According to Baker (2006), there are three universal levels of entry into dual language immersion education and all are segmented according to age. The first level of entry is early immersion where students are introduced to the second language from age five or six (Baker, 2006). Next, the middle immersion level introduces students to the second language from age nine or 10 (Baker, 2006). Finally, the late immersion level introduces students to the second language between the ages of 11 and 14 (Baker, 2006). Students may enter dual language immersion programs and initiate course work at various ages and levels; however, early entry is preferred (Baker, 2006).

In the United States, dual language immersion programs are routinely facilitated in the English and Spanish language and are partially modeled after the Canadian French immersion program for native English speaking students (Howard & Sugarman, 2001). In 1965, students attending schools in Quebec, Canada were provided the opportunity to attend an English-French immersion institution (Howard & Sugarman, 2001). The establishment of this program was due to the increase of native French speaking citizens residing in the area which impacted the social and economic benefits in the region (Genesee, 2006). This program primarily provided enrolled students with instruction in written and oral communication in the native French language, leveled curriculum, and English language development (Genesee, 2006). Cultural competency was also an integrated component of this program to increase student awareness and appreciation of both cultures while maintaining self-identity (Genesee, 2006). The success of the Canadian program demonstrated positive academic results for language-minority and language-majority students and was highly supported by parents and community members (Howard & Sugarman, 2001). In 1971, a Canadian-style Spanish-English

immersion program was launched in Culver City, California (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). This dual language immersion program modeled goals that were established by the Canadian-style immersion program in Quebec, Canada and is the most partially implemented form of dual language immersion program implementation for U.S. schools (Genesee, 2006).

Language immersion programs can be described as either subtractive or additive (May, 2008). Subtractive programs encourage monolingual learning in the primary language resulting in a replacement of one language or another (May, 2008). Additive programs perpetuate bilingualism and biliteracy by adding another language to students' existing language skills and are practiced at each level throughout the duration of the program (May, 2008).

Transitional, maintenance, and enrichment are three comprehensive models of bilingual education that are routinely encompassed in longitudinal research studies and implemented in educational institutions throughout the United States (May, 2008). Transitional bilingual programs use students' first language as the medium of instruction; however, the aim is to scaffold the dominant language after the first 2 years of instruction and move toward the development of secondary language and academic proficiencies (Minaya-Rowe, 2008). Transitional bilingual programs do not encourage bilingualism; however, these programs are organized to encourage monolingual skills typically in the dominant language (Minaya-Rowe, 2008). Teachers in these programs are certified in bilingual education to ensure solid native language development (Minaya-Rowe, 2008). Students continue to receive language support once mainstreamed in content-based English instruction (Minaya-Rowe, 2008).

Maintenance bilingual education programs integrate native language instruction in core subjects until students can make the transition to English speaking classes (May, 2008). This program aims to develop a solid academic foundation for students in their dominant language that subsequently facilitates the acquisition of literacy in the second language (Cummins, 2000). Maintenance bilingual education programs do not incorporate the development or reach of the minority language (May, 2008). Second language instruction is established at an early phase and implemented 50% of the time (Cummins, 2000).

Enrichment bilingual education programs focus on academic proficiency through the medium of using second language instruction where literacy in the second language can be attained (Murphy, 2016). This program model is synonymous to the vision of a dual language immersion program model, in that it specifically aims for bilingualism and biliteracy for individual students and maintenance for the minority language (Murphy, 2016).

Exposing students to a second language speaking environment is significant toward acquiring mastery using foreign language skills needed to communicate (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008). Students who are enrolled in dual language immersion programs can each serve as linguistic support and peer models (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008). Learners are able to give attention to the language being used in multiple situations and have considerable opportunities to use the target language through peer and instructional dialogue (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008).

Lindholm-Leary (2000) listed seven key features needed to implement and sustain an effective dual language immersion program:

1. Strong administrative support and instructional leadership.
2. Positive school climate conducive for all students to learn.
3. High quality instructional personnel.
4. Professional development and teacher training opportunities.
5. Instructional design that promotes achievement, biliteracy, and bilingualism.
6. Understanding student needs and best ratios for classroom composition.
7. Parent involvement and home/school collaboration (p. 20).

Balanced student ratio is an integral component toward implementing and sustaining dual language immersion programs (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008). Dual language immersion programs can be successful considering both language groups do not fall below 30% capacity of the classroom population (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008).

The decision to allocate time for student exposure to the secondary language is very important to proper language development, exposure, and success of the program. There are three approaches schools can use to accomplish language distribution. The most facilitated program models used in dual language immersion programs are the 50:50 and 90:10, which refers to the percentage of instruction time offered (Gomez et al., 2005). The 50:50 language immersion program model is evenly split at all grade levels (Gomez et al., 2005). On a daily basis, students access the curriculum in one language in the morning and the other in the afternoon (Gomez et al., 2005). There are varied constructs of this model where the split is weekly (Gomez et al., 2005). Students apply to their curriculum in one language 1 week and the other during the subsequent week (Gomez et al., 2005). In kindergarten and first-grade levels, programs adjust the percentage of instruction time using the half and half week approach for this model

(Gomez et al., 2005). Facilitating full secondary language instruction on a week-by-week split for primary-aged students with limited second language proficiency is counterproductive toward retaining acquired language skills due to the interruption of the need for students to receive rote language instruction (Gomez et al., 2005).

The 90:10 model is used by most learning programs at the kindergarten and first-grade levels (Christian & Howard, 2002). This model provides minority language development for 90% of instruction where the English language is communicated through a medium of 10% (Christian & Howard, 2002). Minority language first is a strategy used to teach initial literacy instruction (Christian & Howard, 2002). This strategy is typically practiced in combination with the 90:10 model (Mora et al., 2001). The approach integrates minority language and native English language speakers with literacy instruction in the minority language only (Mora et al., 2001). Literacy instruction occurs through the small percentage of the day where instruction in the primary language is facilitated (Mora et al., 2001). This strategy of enrichment is used to accelerate language proficiency among minority language learners (Mora et al., 2001). As students advance to the next grade level, the percentage of instruction communicated in the secondary language decreases while the percentage of instruction communicated in the primary language increases (Christian & Howard, 2002).

The 70:30 model is practiced at the second-grade level by most dual language immersion programs (Christian & Howard, 2002). Seventy percent of instruction is facilitated in the secondary language and 30% of instruction is facilitated in the primary language (Christian & Howard, 2002). At the third-grade level, the 60:40 model is typically practiced (Christian & Howard, 2002). Students receive core instruction 60% of

the time in the secondary language and 40% of core instruction in the primary language (Christian & Howard, 2002).

At the fourth-grade level, the percentage of instructional time is implemented at 50:50 ratios of which primary and secondary languages are balanced during core instruction (Christian & Howard, 2002). Both languages simultaneously strategy is routinely matched with the 50:50 model (Christian & Howard, 2002). This approach allows students to stay in integrated groups throughout the school day and receive literacy instruction in the primary and partner language (Christian & Howard, 2002). The 50:50 ratios are most common with programs that continue on to secondary levels (Christian & Howard, 2002).

Teachers who are highly qualified to teach elective courses such as art, music, physical education, computer, and library facilitate instructional activities at all grade levels throughout the school ("Center for Applied Linguistics," 2018). The percentage of instructional time communicated in the primary language must be included at each grade level ("Center for Applied Linguistics," 2018). During assemblies, morning announcements, lunch, and recess, the percentage of time allocated for students to speak the primary language must also be included ("Center for Applied Linguistics," 2018). This practice will maintain the integrity of the time students are exposed to the secondary language ("Center for Applied Linguistics," 2018).

Separation of languages strategy allows students the opportunity to be fully immersed in each language of dual language immersion program delivery (Christian & Howard, 2002). This strategy requires teachers to use the partner and English languages separately and explicitly during instructional activities (Christian & Howard, 2002).

Instructional materials also lend to the effectiveness of using separate languages. If there are two different teachers facilitating core instruction in separate classrooms, instructional materials are to align with the language communicated and taught in corresponding environments (Christian & Howard, 2002). If students receive instruction in an environment where both languages are being taught, both language materials are to be represented and clearly distinguished throughout the instructional setting (Christian & Howard, 2002). This may be accomplished by color coding materials or designing specific areas or zones in the classroom (Christian & Howard, 2002). This approach is most significant to student development in primary grades as they are achieving at the emergent understanding of reading and writing (Christian & Howard, 2002).

Student output also refers to the strategy of separating languages during instructional sessions (Christian & Howard, 2002). Students are encouraged to use academic language to communicate with peers (Christian & Howard, 2002). As students are prepared for the next level of rigor, heightened teacher expectations lend to increased communication skills in the minority language (Christian & Howard, 2002).

### **Benefits of Dual Language Immersion Programs**

**Academic benefits.** Researchers has attentively monitored the growing rate of languages other than English being spoken in homes of children. Multiple studies have been conducted to determine developmental characteristics of dual-language learners (Carlson & Melzoff, 2008). Carlson and Melzoff (2008) exposed scientific inquiry, noting that children who are exposed to dual-language instruction have significantly improved executive function. These students present advanced problem-solving skills and planning skills, are more goal oriented, and can monitor their own performance



(Carlson & Melzoff, 2008). More significantly, the domains of executive control illustrated that these advancements commenced across levels of socioeconomic status which indicates that bilingual language skills improve academic achievement in children from bilingual backgrounds (Barac & Bialystok, 2012). Barac and Bialystok (2012) found that bilingual children from low-income families reared in language minority homes outperformed monolinguals on a number of verbal and nonverbal tasks, showing that school readiness is enhanced through the development of linguistic skills in bilingual children. These findings provide a foundation for deciding instructional and program models, academic expectations, and assessment practices that support the extended development of dual-language learners (Barac & Bialystok, 2012). This growing body of evidence reinforces multiple research studies on the importance of maintaining home languages while also extending the benefits of multilingualism to all learners (Barac & Bialystok, 2012).

The most unchanging findings from dual language immersion research is that bilinguals demonstrate increased developed recognition of the construct and functions of language (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, & Mohanty, 2009). Bilinguals' cognizance of language and their intellectual strategies are improved as a result of the challenging communicative environment in which their bilingual capacities have advanced (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2009).

A 4-year study was conducted by Collier and Thomas (2004) to investigate native English speakers from Houston, Texas enrolled in a two-way dual language program. The purpose of this study was to determine academic gains achieved by bilingual students compared to peers attending traditional instructional programs (Collier &

Thomas, 2004). Upon conclusion of this study, bilingual students were administered the Stanford 9 assessment and scored between the 63<sup>rd</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> percentiles, outperforming their monolingual peers attending traditional programs (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Native English speakers administered the Stanford 9 assessment who were enrolled in traditional programs scored in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (Collier & Thomas, 2004). The instructional foundation of dual language immersion programs from this study provides improved academic outcomes (Collier & Thomas, 2004). It presents a full medium of learning that is conducive to closing the achievement gap compared to existing traditional programs (Collier & Thomas, 2004).

Maxwell (2015) found that students attending a dual language immersion school in North Carolina scored notably higher in fourth-grade reading than their monolingual peers. During the 2012-2013 school year, students attending Collinswood Language Academy took its first end-of-grade assessment, which is aligned to the North Carolina Common Core Standards (Maxwell, 2015). With a 70% proficiency rate, these students outscored their monolingual peers across the school district and state achieving at grade level or higher in math (Maxwell, 2015). By juxtaposition, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District averaged 46% and the state of North Carolina averaged 42% (Maxwell, 2015). In reading, 65% of students scored at or above grade level, compared to 46% for the district and 44% for the state (Maxwell, 2015). This standard of performance for students attending Collinswood Language Academy continued through eighth grade (Maxwell, 2015).

In a study conducted by Bae (2007), third and fourth grade native English and native Korean speaking students' reading and writing progress was analyzed and

correlated with their monolingual peers. Findings from this study indicate exceptional reading and writing development in English that exceeded their English speaking peers attending traditional programs (Bae, 2007). Padilla, Fan, Xu, and Silva (2013) conducted a study that proved 124 native English speakers in third through fifth grade enrolled in a Mandarin immersion program outperformed peers who were enrolled in a traditional program. Lindholm-Leary (2001) investigated three Korean 70:30 two-way immersion programs. Native English speaking students attending second through fourth grade achieved well above grade level (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). The results from these studies advance the notion that dual language immersion programs yield heightened academic achievement outcomes whether native English or Spanish or Korean speakers are tested (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

Dual language immersion programs produce the lowest dropout rates among high school students (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Collier and Thomas (2004) conducted a longitudinal study and found that when schools implement the 90:10 and 50:50 models, Native English and foreign language students attain the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in all subjects and sustain upward trajectory progress as they advance to their secondary education. The students analyzed in this study outperformed their monolingual peers in all subjects after 4-7 years in attending the program (Collier & Thomas, 2004). These data are derived from programs that have implemented this model through middle school (Collier & Thomas, 2004).

A 5-year qualitative and quantitative study was conducted by Collier and Thomas (2002) to measure academic achievement and participation in five urban and rural school districts located in the northeast, northwest, south central, and southeast of the United

States. Students attending these institutions were found most likely to achieve the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on assessment scores in primary and secondary languages (Collier & Thomas, 2002). These students were also found less likely to drop out of school (Collier & Thomas, 2002).

In the state of California, Lindholm-Leary (2001) conducted a study to measure progress in reading and language achievement. Longitudinal and cross-sectional results were steady for native language reading achievement as measured in accordance with California state norms (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). English speakers who began the dual language immersion program since kindergarten and began English reading instruction in third grade performed at grade level and at least as high as the California statewide norms for English speakers instructed only in English (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Late entry students attending the 90:10 programs performed at levels similar to students in 50:50 programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). According to these results, dual language immersion English speaking students were able to meet and exceed their peers in English-only instruction (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In language proficiency, each grade level except third grade demonstrated comparable outcomes for the 50:50 and late-entry students attending the 90:10 model (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Although these students spent 10-20% or 50% of their instructional day communicating in English, they were equally proficient (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). These results indicate that both dual language immersion models, 90:10 and 50:50, promoted proficiency in both languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Students attending 90:10 programs since kindergarten demonstrated higher levels of bilingual proficiency than students in the 50:50 program (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). These results indicate that developing high levels of proficiency in the partner

language was much more likely to occur in 90:10 than in 50:50 programs for both English and Spanish speakers (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

Steele et al. (2017) directed a longitudinal study that investigated the general academic effects of immersion programs on native English speakers and second language speakers in the United States. The study covered students enrolled in 12 dual language immersion schools located in an urban school district offering four foreign language options (Steele et al., 2017). Attending students were enrolled in grades kindergarten through eighth grade (Steele et al., 2017). The study attains data from a district-wide lottery system in order to estimate causal effects over time by integrating test scores from a state data system to track students who leave the district but remain in the state (Steele et al., 2017). The Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) was administered yearly and used to measure proficiency in reading, math, and science for Grades 3-8 (Steele et al., 2017). According to the OAKS assessment data in reading, one tenth of a standard deviation in third grade to one-fifth of a standard deviation illustrated advantages of immersion program entry in kindergarten (Steele et al., 2017). Immersion students outperformed their monolingual peers by 12-31% of a standard deviation in the area of math and 14-27% of a standard deviation in the area of science (Steele et al., 2017). Students attending fifth grade outperformed their peers in reading by 7 months and eighth-grade students outperformed their peers by 9 months as measured by the state of Oregon's accountability tests (Steele et al., 2017).

**Cognitive benefits.** Technological growth over the past 30 decades has enabled researchers to apply improved investigative practices to determine how bilingualism interacts with and changes the cognitive and neurological systems (Marian & Shook,

2012). Language surrounds our environment in every aspect each day. We use language to communicate our thoughts and feelings, connect with others, identify with our culture, and understand the world around us (Marian & Shook, 2012). This rich environment of communication warrants two or more language skills for many people (Marian & Shook, 2012).

According to the monolingual United States Census Bureau (2017), one fifth of those over the age of 5 reported speaking a language other than English at home in 2007, an increase of 140% since 1980. Millions of American citizens communicate in languages other than English throughout their daily lives outside of the home environment, at work, or in school (Marian & Shook, 2012). CNN (2001) revealed that up to 66% of the world's children are raised bilingual.

Cognitive research has supported positive outcomes in dual language immersion instructional environments that are directly linked to high levels of student engagement and ease of switching between two languages (Bialystok & Craik, 2010). Being bilingual, in addition to the advantage of enabling communication in multiple languages, improves memory and makes it easier for students to pay attention (Bialystok & Craik, 2010). There are studies that correlate bilingualism with increased cognitive skills, which requires students to alter thought rapidly from one diagrammatic system to another, therefore positively affecting learning in a wide range of subject areas (Bialystok & Craik, 2010).

Experimental research in the past 20 years has uncovered the multitude of bilingual advantages and added gain to individuals at all points along the lifespan (Kroll & Dussias, 2017). For example, to study the language processing of infants and toddlers,

noninvasive brain imaging techniques have been used to allow researchers to deepen the understanding of how the human brain processes language and how distinct experiences with more than one language impact and modify brain functioning (Kroll & Dussias, 2017).

Curtin, Byers-Heinlein, and Werker (2011) have reported that bilingual children at the preschool level are able to discern contextual cues to react in the appropriate language to the appropriate person. The report furthers by concluding that even fetuses can actively process the specific segments of different languages and begin to identify characteristics. Kroll and Dussias (2017) documented that 10- to 12-month-old bilingual infants present higher brain mobility and elevated language processing skills regardless of the time spent for exposure to language learning and language pairs.

Bilingualism to the protection of cognitive resources is synonymous to physical activity to someone who sustains an injury (Kroll & Dussias, 2017). A recent study conducted by Alladi et al. (2013) confirmed a 4.5 year delay in the onset of dementia symptoms for bilinguals relative to monolinguals. The most imperative aspect of this study was the observed delay independent of education, literacy, and other socioeconomic factors (Alladi et al., 2013). At the conclusion of the study, researchers affirmed that no known pharmaceutical agent can produce advanced outcomes as to possessing the skill of bilingualism (Alladi et al., 2013).

Bialystok, Craik, and Luk (2012) asserted the benefits of cognitive and neurological functions of bilingualism carry on into older adulthood. Bilingual individuals appear to encompass the capacity of resisting a natural deterioration of cognitive function and sustaining a “cognitive reserve” (Bialystok et al., 2012, p. 246).

Bilingualism can defend against illness that enhances the decline in aging such as Alzheimer's disease (Bialystok et al., 2012). In a study of more than 200 bilingual and monolingual patients with Alzheimer's disease, bilingual patients reported showing initial symptoms of the disease at the age of 27 years, 7 months which is approximately 5 years, 1 month later than monolingual patients' average of 72-years, 6 months (Bialystok et al., 2012). At the time of diagnosis, bilingual patients were diagnosed 4 years, 3 months later than monolingual patients (Bialystok et al., 2012).

In a follow-up study, Schweizer, Ware, Fischer, Craik, and Bialystok (2012) matched the brains of bilingual and monolingual patients on the intensity of Alzheimer's symptoms. The brains of bilingual patients illustrated a significantly elevated degree of physical deterioration in regions commonly associated with Alzheimer's disease (Schweizer et al., 2012). Moreover, bilingual patients possessed more physical signs of disease than their monolingual peers; however, they performed on par behaviorally, although the degree of brain deterioration suggested their symptoms should present on a more severe scale (Schweizer et al., 2012). Researchers of this study stated that if the brain is an engine, bilingualism may help to improve its mileage, allowing it to go farther on the same amount of fuel (Schweizer et al., 2012).

**Cultural and social benefits.** Learning a second language enables advantages toward enhancing cultural proficiency. Students who are enrolled in dual language immersion programs develop cultural competencies while sustaining high standards for learning through a multi-cultural approach (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). Bilingual education gives students a wide perspective and primary interactions with diverse student populations which brings them closer to different races and nationalities (Deussen, 2014).



Methods of communication are increasingly significant due to a changing society; therefore, students who are able to communicate with multiple cultures will have more opportunities in life (Deussen, 2014).

Fortune, Christian, and Tedick (2011) conducted a study to assess 143 students attending two dual language immersion programs in the state of California regarding their views and awareness of culture using a student survey. The survey was designed using a Likert scale format. Students were prompted to rate themselves on their knowledge of the Chinese culture (Fortune et al., 2011). Fifty percent of students responded by stating they have considerable knowledge, while the remaining responded to having some knowledge (Fortune et al., 2011). Ninety-one percent of students surveyed agreed when asked if they understood some aspects of the Chinese culture in regard to literature, art, and music (Fortune et al., 2011). Sixty-six percent of students agreed when asked if they enjoy Chinese music, art, and literature; and 50% agreed to participating in cultural activities outside of school (Fortune et al., 2011). Ethnic or language groups did not differ in any of the student responses (Fortune et al., 2011).

Bilingual programs offer students competencies and confidence to participate in cross-cultural interactions. Fortune et al. (2011) asked students to rate their comfort level regarding how they feel about interacting in situations or groups with mostly peers from unlike cultures. Ninety-seven percent of native English speaking students reported they feel very comfortable interacting with Chinese or Chinese Americans (Fortune et al., 2011). These results affirm that the majority of students have high comfort levels interacting with groups that are different from them (Fortune et al., 2011).

Fortune et al. (2011) found that 81% of students are happy with attending the

Chinese dual language immersion program. Sixty-eight percent of students stated they enjoy learning two languages (Fortune et al., 2011). Eighty-eight percent of students surveyed agreed the dual language immersion program gives them an advantage over their monolingual peers (Fortune et al., 2011). Ninety percent of students stated their understanding of the Chinese culture is due to learning the Chinese language (Fortune et al., 2011). Sixty-four percent of students surveyed agreed to using the partner language as a reference when unable to discern a concept when presented in one language (Fortune et al., 2011).

Dual language immersion programs serve as an additive and enrichment-oriented curriculum that aims to develop high levels of bilingualism and positive cross-cultural views (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). Bearse and Dejong (2008) conducted a qualitative study to investigate middle and high school dual language immersion program perceptions of high school students who attended a dual language immersion program from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Students studied also attended secondary level specialized courses (Bearse & Dejong, 2008). The study was facilitated at a long standing diverse dual language immersion program located in the northeastern region of the United States. One hundred percent of students considered themselves bilingual (Bearse & Dejong, 2008). Native English speaking students specifically asserted they were bilingual due to the duration of program attendance and fluency skills in speaking the Spanish language (Bearse & Dejong, 2008). Native English speaking students also felt more culturally aware and Spanish speaking students felt bicultural due to curriculum projects through country studies, literature, and program constructs (Bearse & Dejong, 2008). All students responded to prompts indicating their sensitivity and comfort levels interacting with

students from diverse backgrounds, specifically those who advanced through the cohort since kindergarten (Bears & Dejong, 2008). Native English speaking students affirmed their liking to communicating with peers who speak different languages (Bears & Dejong, 2008).

**Postsecondary opportunities: Employment.** In today's global economy, students with dual language skills stand out from peers to potential employees and are being recruited at high rates by international companies (Gándara, 2015). Using a national data set that began with 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students, Santibañez and Zárate (2014) conducted a study by comparing Asian and Latino students who reported they communicated fluent in a second language with monolingual students. The study covered all socioeconomic and immigration status measures relative to impacting high school graduation and college admissions (Santibañez & Zárate, 2014). Findings reported bilingual students from both groups were more likely to receive a high school diploma and go to college than their monolingual peers (Santibañez & Zárate, 2014). Baum, Ma, and Payea (2013) noted that bilinguals who graduate from college will earn more money, pay more taxes, and volunteer for community service projects.

Rumbaut (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effects of bilingualism on more than 6,000 adults in their mid to late 20s. Researchers made clear distinction among limited, moderate, and fluent bilingual and monolingual peers in this age group extending across multiple ethnicities (Rumbaut, 2014). Results indicated, in addition to reduced high school dropout rates, that bilingual adults achieved elevated positions in their occupations and earnings (Rumbaut, 2014); the more fluent in multiple languages, the higher the benefits. There were also findings declaring candidates with limited

bilingualism yielded increased earnings (Rumbaut, 2014).

The greatest payoff for employment opportunities does not come from monolingual programs, rather from dual language programs (Porras, Jungyeon, & Giandara, 2014). Porras et al. (2014) surveyed approximately 300 small, medium, and large businesses from all divisions of the economy in the state of California. The survey asked employers about their preference for employing bilingual candidates and if they would pay them for their language skills (Porras et al., 2014). Research findings illustrated that across all labor sectors, two thirds of employers stated that they favored bilingual employees if their skills were comparable to their monolingual peers (Porras et al., 2014). There were only a few employers who were willing to compensate bilingual employees; however, bilingual candidates who interviewed felt their language skills gave them an advantage and greater job security (Porras et al., 2014). Transportation, management, and hospitality services employers' preferences to hire bilingual candidates increased from 80% to 100% (Porras et al., 2014). These findings validated that in the state of California, bilingual candidates are sought after and have an advantage over their monolingual peers (Porras et al., 2014).

Damari et al. (2017) led a study to identify demands for bilingual employees and to quantify the specific corporate divisions and actions that need public and interpersonal communication in a foreign language. The study further examined the hiring methods these companies facilitate to determine the best fit for their organization to meet their staffing needs (Damari et al., 2017). Data were derived from the 2014 Recruiting Trends Survey, Global Talent section that was administered yearly by the Michigan State University Collegiate Employment Research Institute (Damari et al., 2017). The study

categorically researched 2,101 participants from various types of organizations who preferred bilingual skills in their new hires, valued bilingual skills the most, the corporate functions that were more likely to require bilingual skills, and the academic majors that were most frequently sought by employers in combination with bilingual skills (Damari et al., 2017). Findings illustrated that 93% of participants value employees who have proficient customer service skills, who are able to build relationships with clients, and are able to work effectively with businesses from different countries and cultures (Damari et al., 2017). Sixty-six percent of participants confirmed their practice of identifying bilingual skills during the hiring process, 41% of participants preferred to hire multilingual applicants, and only 10% of participants noted the requirement to speak multiple languages other than English for new skills (Damari et al., 2017). Results also illustrated high demand industries such as public administration, information services, educational services, health care, and the administrative division hold a requirement to hire bilingual candidates (Damari et al., 2017). Additional skill sets such as customer services, sales, vendor management, and marketing were high demand divisions for bilingual candidates (Damari et al., 2017). The survey also illustrated college majors preferred an association with dual language aptitude skills (Damari et al., 2017). This unique study and its discovery of findings are critically important to educational programs seeking to understand the value of language in today's global economy (Damari et al., 2017).

**Postsecondary opportunities: College.** One of the major benefits of a bilingual education is that children are not only raised to be bilingual but also biliterate (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This can give children more opportunities when it

comes to choosing further education (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Bilingual students are able to choose which university they want to apply and in which country, depending on the languages they speak (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

College and university leaders have expressed interest with expanding opportunities to market Chinese language and culture in the United States (Center for Global Education, 2008). According to the Asia Society and the College Board, the United States has experienced a growth of enthusiasm and popularity of Chinese language programs (Center for Global Education, 2008). There are multiple circumstances that exist to heighten this increase (Center for Global Education, 2008). Fiscal and bureaucratic influence of China is a contributing factor to this trend that has driven many businesses, educators, and parents to request programs that can provide students with much higher levels of proficiency in Chinese (Center for Global Education, 2008). The Chinese language is also the most widely spoken first language in the world due to its growing domination in the world (Bolotnikov, 2018). Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade school systems are acknowledging the demand to incorporate Chinese in their language continuum (Bolotnikov, 2018). The U.S. Department of Education has created funding options through grant programs with the intent for school districts to implement foreign language programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The purpose of this initiative is to improve opportunities to employ constituents by the U.S. Defense Department who are proficient with speaking the Chinese Language, as this is a critical need to furthering our country's economy and defense systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

### **Why Parents Select Dual Language Immersion Programs**

The theory of school choice recommends that parents will select effective programs and withdraw or will not elect to send their children to low-performing schools (Wolfe, 2003). Parents are a critical component and a reliable source of information regarding decisions around the educational and language requirements for students. Their perspective is key for schools to drive the vision toward program development and implementation. The backbone of many successful programs has been due to the advocacy of parents (Wolfe, 2003).

Revisions that are needed for schools to be effective with innovative practices that are conducive to increasing knowledge and skills for student achievement are increasingly supported by parents (Walberg, 2007). Failure status of many schools illustrated by proficiency scores have alerted parents more now than in past decades (Walberg, 2007). Due to these factors, the United States has established laws that govern parents' rights to choose where their children may attend school to receive an education (Walberg, 2007). Parents are more conscious of these laws and are staunch supporters with holding schools accountable for high stakes assessment results (Walberg, 2007). Parents maximize their right to choose the best education for their children and are dedicated to selecting the most innovative program and funding options available to prepare their child for postsecondary opportunities (Walberg, 2007).

Dual language immersion programs are increasing in popularity all across the United States (Gross, 2016). The Department of Education of New York City reported an additional 40 dual language immersion programs were established during the 2015-2016 school year (Gross, 2016). Three additional kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade dual

language immersion programs opened during the 2016-2017 school year to provide students continued options of dual language immersion instruction beyond elementary school (Gross, 2016). Research conducted by Collier and Thomas (2012) has illustrated extensive findings to support high academic achievement outcomes acquired by students attending dual language immersion programs. These benefits, which include learning a foreign language, gaining cultural proficiency, and occupational advantages, are motivating factors driving parents to seek dual language immersion programs to educate their children.

Glazerman and Dotter (2016) conducted a study with the purpose of identifying parent interests when choosing a school to educate their children in the District of Columbia public schools. Parents were provided a list of charter and traditional public schools and tasked to rank these schools in order of preference (Glazerman & Dotter, 2016). The results were analyzed and organized in rank order (Glazerman & Dotter, 2016). Selections made by participating parents highlighted the types of schools that were in high demand in the District of Columbia area (Glazerman & Dotter, 2016). Glazerman and Dotter found that in addition to high performance scores, parents primarily preferred schools that are in close proximity of the residence. Parents of students in the 11 through 14 age group are willing to select a school 1.2 miles farther from the home for a 10-point improvement of proficiency and 2.1 miles for an increase of 10-20% of the student population being the same ethnicity as the child (Glazerman & Dotter, 2016). This study also revealed that measures of desiring a quality education varied based on the category of the parent (Glazerman & Dotter, 2016). High priority was placed on the quality of education by parents living below the poverty line, and high



proficiency scores were desired by parents living well above the poverty line (Glazerman & Dotter, 2016).

Research conducted by Walberg (2007) indicated that parents place high value on academic achievement when selecting school options and are communicating these educational advantages to other parents throughout their communities. These benefits intrigued by parents are primarily being used to drive the school reform discussion between the community, school districts, and law makers (Walberg, 2007).

Dual language immersion programs are increasingly sought after by parents from all ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds as the primary mode of education delivery for their children. Mehisto (2012) noted benefits of individuals, schools, and societies who possess bilingual skills as having heightened mental flexibility, improved inter-cultural skills, and occupational advantages. Heightened mental flexibility in bilingual education provides improved executive functioning of the brain, which is vital for all cognitive life and particularly relevant to critical thinking and other higher order abilities that correlate with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Mehisto, 2012). Improved inter-cultural skills enable students the capacity for contextual consciousness and increased intercultural communication (Mehisto, 2012). Opportunities for global exchange and trade provides graduates of bilingual programs an advantage upon competing for jobs in an ever changing global economy (Mehisto, 2012).

Ramos (2007) conducted a quantitative study regarding the gratification of 366 parents of children enrolled in a prekindergarten through fifth grade Spanish and English dual language immersion program located in a large urban South Florida school district. Parents were given a survey and tasked to answer a series of questions regarding their

level of program satisfaction, why they chose to enroll their child in the dual language immersion program, their level of support for the Spanish language, and their perception of the Spanish language (Ramos, 2007). Results data concluded strong parent support of the dual language immersion program (Ramos, 2007); 41.8% of parent participants indicated their choice for the dual language immersion program was due to the possibility for their children to speak multiple languages in order to communicate in the Spanish language and to be culturally proficient (Ramos, 2007). An edge on curriculum, quality and occupational outcomes were the primary selection of 33.4% of parent participants (Ramos, 2007). Thirty-four point two percent and 42.3% of parent participants selected this option as their second and third reason for dual language immersion enrollment (Ramos, 2007). Twenty point eight percent of parent participants selected their primary desire to enroll their child in the dual language immersion program was due to it being a neighborhood school (Ramos, 2007). Five point two percent and 9% of parent participants selected this option as their second and third choice (Ramos, 2007).

According to the results of this study, Ramos confirmed a strong support for the dual language immersion program on behalf of parent participants. Parents highly regarded the curriculum, literacy instruction, and the fact their children were developing Spanish language communication skills (Ramos, 2007). Parents also indicated strong support was provided in the home environment with the development of their child's linguistic and literacy skills (Ramos, 2007). Parents of this study expressed their gratitude for the fundamental assets this program offered their child in terms of academic enrichment, exposure to other languages, and cultures (Ramos, 2007).

Shannon and Milian (2002) surveyed parents of students enrolled in 10 dual

language immersion programs located in a Colorado state school district. This quantitative and qualitative study was conducted prior to constituent voting to continue dual language programs in the state of Colorado (Shannon & Milian, 2002). Parents were tasked to respond to prompts regarding why they chose a dual language immersion program to educate their children, their perception of the dual language immersion program, and effectiveness (Shannon & Milian, 2002). Parents were provided the option of using their primary language to respond in English or Spanish (Shannon & Milian, 2002); 54.7% of parent participants responded in the Spanish language and 45.3% responded using the English language (Shannon & Milian, 2002). According to survey data, 46% of families speak Spanish in the home, 32% speak English, and 21% of families are bilingual (Shannon & Milian, 2002). These data confirmed a balanced ratio of language diversity enrolled in the dual language immersion program (Shannon & Milian). An average of 83% of parent participants agreed their children were bilingual (Shannon & Milian, 2002). An average of 86% of parent participants agreed to the importance for their child to be bilingual, and 91% of participants acknowledged the advantages of the dual language immersion dual language immersion program (Shannon & Milian, 2002). Findings validate that parents understand the benefits regarding dual language immersion program advantages over monolingual programs (Shannon & Milian, 2002). Qualitative data illustrated parent motivation for their children to attend a dual language immersion program was due to their desire for them to become bilingual and have increased education and employment opportunities after graduation (Shannon & Milian, 2002). Overall, parents agree with the innovative strategies that perpetuate communication and cultural proficiency and are dedicated to supporting the ongoing and

expansion of dual language immersion programs throughout the state (Shannon & Milian, 2002).

Howard et al. (2003) conducted an analysis of studies depicting parent motivation regarding their selection of dual language immersion programs. Findings from these studies yield parents favor dual language immersion programs (Howard et al., 2003). Native English speaking parents agree that dual language immersion programs offer an edge for students to solidify heightened opportunities after high school graduation, such as job options and college admissions (Howard et al., 2003). Parents prefer their children to be proficient with speaking multiple languages and enhancing their cultural proficiency skills (Howard et al., 2003). Parent participation was investigated by two studies that found the importance of including both language options for all school functions motivated parents to navigate school resources and volunteer for school activities (Howard et al., 2003).

The Aldama Elementary dual language program located in Los Angeles Unified School District was created due to a high demand from parents (Flores & Soto, 2012). The possibilities of students acquiring a second language, exposure to a challenging curriculum, and gaining cultural proficiency skills motivated parents to advocate for this educational opportunity (Flores & Soto, 2012). To accomplish this goal, parents gathered research to further educate themselves on the dual language immersion model and program benefits, enlisted support from other parents, and collaborated with Los Angeles Unified School District executives and board members to communicate their concerns and vision (Flores & Soto, 2012). The voices of parents were heard and Aldama Elementary School was the selected site to launch the Spanish dual language immersion

program (Flores & Soto, 2012). After 4 years of successful launching, Aldama Elementary School maintained a waiting list from kindergarten through fifth grades and sustained strong parent and community partnership support (Flores & Soto, 2012).

Lao (2004) surveyed 86 parents of students enrolled in a Chinese-English bilingual preschool located in the city of San Francisco. Parents of Chinese descent made up 60% of participants with 40% of participating English speaking parents (Lao, 2004). Sixty percent of Chinese parents and 100% of the English speaking parents were college graduates (Lao, 2004). Parent participants' annual income ranged from \$20,000 to \$50,000 with English speaking parents averaging at the higher end (Lao, 2004). Parents were tasked to lend their opinions regarding multi-lingual education options, indicate why they chose a Chinese-English immersion program to educate their children, elaborate on their perceptions regarding dual language immersion education, and note curriculum supports they provide to their child in the home (Lao, 2004). Findings listed parent consensus for favoring the Chinese-English language education program and the advantages this program offered their children (Lao, 2004). Parents agreed that better career opportunities, positive self-image, and effective communication within the Chinese-speaking community were major factors leading to their selection of a Chinese-English dual language immersion program (Lao, 2004). Parents further indicated that dual language immersion programs are effective to improving bilingual skills for children in the primary and partner languages (Lao, 2004).

In a quantitative and qualitative study conducted by Giacchino-Baker and Piller (2006), parents confirmed their ambition, approach, support, and dedication to ensuring the success of a dual language immersion program located in San Bernardino, California.

Participants were tasked to complete a survey consisting of 19 items which requested demographic information, parent education levels, primary language spoken, why they chose to send their children to a dual language immersion program, supports available at home to continue language development for their children, positive experiences, concerns, and suggestions for program improvement (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006). According to survey data, factors driving parents' decisions to choose dual language immersion schools are due to the exceptional reputation of the program and teachers (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006). Parents stress the importance for their children to possess bilingual skills and be academically successful in order to function in a bilingual society and multilingual world (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006). Findings also indicate that parents are willing to drive an extended distance from the home residence or use bus transportation to maintain their child's enrollment in the dual language immersion program (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006). In terms of support with homework, 100% of all parents indicated support with this task (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006); 92.9% of English parents and 86.7% of Spanish parents confirmed support with Spanish homework (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006); and 85.7% of English parents and 80% of Spanish parents indicated they read to their children (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006). Parents communicated their vision to ensure continued dual language immersion program implementation with the possibility of expanding more facilities at the secondary level throughout the school district (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006).

Parents are serving as catalysts for implementing and sustaining dual language immersion programs (Flores & Soto, 2012). Due to the critical role parents play with the success of schools across the United States, they are dedicated to serving as strong

advocates for their children by ensuring states hold school districts accountable with embedding innovative curriculum into their programs that are conducive to providing students an advantage to compete for global opportunities after high school graduation (Flores & Soto, 2012).

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 illustrates the impact parents have on their children's education. Based on these studies, parents are motivated to select dual language immersion programs due to the academic achievement and cognitive, social, cultural, and postsecondary educational and occupational advantages needed for their children to be competitive in a global society.

This study was designed to explore in more detail why parents select a dual language immersion program as the school of their choice for their children. By learning more about the reasoning behind such decision-making and understanding the factors that influence these decisions, the researcher sought to add to the knowledge base of parents' views of dual language immersion. Chapter 3 describes the research design used in this study, including collection, display, and analysis of data.

#### **Research Design**

This study was designed to detail why parents choose dual language immersion programs to educate their children. This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the motivations for parents to enroll their child in a dual language immersion language program?
  - 1.1 What educational goals do immersion parents have for their child?
  - 1.2 What perceptions and expectations do parents have for their child's immersion program?
  - 1.3 Do beliefs about the dual language immersion programs influence parents' decisions?



2. What are the stated factors that influence immersion parents' decision-making?

2.1 Does an immersion parent's own school experience influence his/her decisions?

2.2 Does an immersion parent's role perception influence his/her decision?

A qualitative research design was used for this study to “draw on the everyday practices of asking and answering questions and discovering the everyday identities of questioner/answerer and interviewer/interviewee” (Seale, Gobo, & Gubrium, 2004, p. 16). These interviews allowed the researcher to see the circumstance of interest through the participants' eyes in lieu of how others might view it (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). “Qualitative interviews are, by their very nature, social encounters where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective and prospective accounts or versions of their past or future actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts” (Seale et al., 2004, p. 16). “The aim of qualitative studies is to discover and discern a deeper understanding of those who are being interviewed” (Seale et al., 2004, p. 16).

There are four data collection types of qualitative research: (a) qualitative observation, (b) qualitative interview, (c) qualitative documents, (d) qualitative audio and visual materials (Creswell, 2014, p. 190). When using qualitative observation, the researcher notes behavior within the studied environment. These notes are unstructured or semi-structured depending on desired information (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative observation data collection type uses open-ended questions which enable interviewees to provide their views in an unstructured way (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative interviews are conducted in various mediums such as face to face, telephone, or focus group of six to

eight participants (Creswell, 2014). The goal for these sessions was to gather judgment and perceptions from the participants (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative documents are public data such as meeting minutes, reports, and media resources or private data such as emails, personal or reflective journals, and diaries that are collected by the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative audio and visual materials are used in the form of videotapes, social media text, sound, and art forms (Creswell, 2014). These data collection mediums are included as integral components of choice for the qualitative study (Creswell, 2014). This study used qualitative interviews as data collection methods.

To correlate with the aim of this study, the researcher selected an ethnographic design, as this style of qualitative research increased knowledge about broad culture-sharing behavior of participating individuals and groups using their own pronouncements (Sangasubana, 2011). There are three forms of practice used when conducting ethnographic research (Angrosino, 2007):

- Observation: the process of which events and associations of people are viewed in the field setting.
- Interviewing: the action of facilitating dialogue with persons under study to collect information.
- Archival research: the inspection of existing materials that are maintained for the purposes of official and unofficial investigation or service (Angrosino, 2007).

The practice of interviewing was the primary form of the ethnographic study design as it provided a holistic, inclusive, and inquiry-based understanding highlighting enthusiasms that lend to various decision-making factors for parents when selecting dual language

immersion programs to educate their children (Creswell, 2014, p. 187).

### Participants

Individual interviews with 19 parents of students enrolled and assigned to lower and upper grade levels during the 2017-2018 school year volunteered to participate in this study (see Table 1). The selected dual language immersion program that was investigated is located in the 10<sup>th</sup> largest school district in North Carolina's south central piedmont region. Participating parents were required to have at least one child enrolled in the respective immersion program at the time of the interviews. Parents were asked to share experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward the dual language immersion program of which their child was currently enrolled.

Table 1

#### *Characteristics of Study's Participants*

Parent	Gender	Grade of child	Native language
P1	Female	Kindergarten	English
P2	Male	2 <sup>nd</sup>	English
P3	Female	Kindergarten	English
P4	Male	Kindergarten	English
P5	Male	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	English
P6	Female	Kindergarten & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	English
P7	Female	Kindergarten	English
P8	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Spanish
P9	Female	Kindergarten	English
P10	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup>	English
P11	Male	4 <sup>th</sup>	English
P12	Female	4 <sup>th</sup>	English
P13	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup>	English
P14	Female	4 <sup>th</sup>	Spanish
P15	Male	1 <sup>st</sup>	Spanish
P16	Female	4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , & Kindergarten	Spanish
P17	Female	4 <sup>th</sup> & Kindergarten	Spanish
P18	Female	Kindergarten	Spanish
P19	Female	4 <sup>th</sup>	Spanish

In order to obtain participants for this study, the researcher employed

nonprobability sampling. The nonprobability sampling method for this study was not used to “perpetuate selection bias,” as stated by El-Masri (2017, p. 17); rather, it was used to “bring about understanding that in turn can affect and improve practice” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). The participant selection process heavily depended on the principal leading CAF Elementary School as he served as the primary contact. After corresponding with the principal and providing him with information regarding the study, the researcher worked with him to distribute parent interview requests to solidify parents who may have been interested in participating in the study (see Table 1). This form of nonprobability sampling is called convenience sampling where “people are selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to respond” (El-Masri, 2017, p. 17).

Oswald, Zaidi, Cheatham, and Brody (2018) investigated measures of parent involvement by using question stems from the 2012 National Household Education Surveys (NHES) program. “Survey items included in the measure addressed parent participation in school activities, participation in school meetings, learning activities at home, learning activities in the community, and parent involvement in homework” (Oswald et al., 2018, p. 317). A component from the resulting measure from this study suggested that parents who participated in research studies were often also more involved in their child’s education (Oswald et al., 2018, p. 317).

### **Demographic Questionnaire**

Questionnaires are used by researchers to develop an understanding about the dissemination of attributes, perspectives, or theory of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Prior to the interviews, participants were asked to fill out a 10-item basic demographic questionnaire (Appendix A). They were asked to provide voluntary

information about their ethnic and language background as well as their level of education (see Table 2). These questions were designed to assist with learning more about each participant prior to the interview. Additionally, the questionnaire provided a baseline of understanding the population which allowed the researcher to compare the respondents to each other during the researcher's analysis of the interview data. The researcher distributed the demographic questionnaire prior to the start of the interview session. The questionnaire took participants approximately five minutes to complete all questions.

Table 2

*Participants' Demographic Information*

Gender	Ethnic background	Level of education	Do you speak a foreign language?
Males: 5	White: 5	College degree: 14	Spanish: 11
Females: 14	Black: 6	High school: 4	German: 1
	Hispanic: 8	Middle school: 1	Hebrew: 1
			Peruvian: 1
			French: 1

### **Unstructured Interviews**

The researcher chose semi-structured interviews as these allowed parents the freedom to express their views on their own terms and encouraged two-way communication during individual sessions (Conradin & Keller, 2018). This form of interviewing in a qualitative study provided in-depth responses that produced not just answers but the reasons for the answers due to the flexibility of allowing the conversation a certain amount of freedom (Conradin & Keller, 2018). Participants were also encouraged to talk in an open-ended manner about the topics under discussion or any other matters they felt were relevant (Conradin & Keller, 2018).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) revised parental involvement model and research conducted by Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, and Hoover-Dempsey (2005) provided aligning perspective for assembling interview questions (see Appendix B) for interview protocol). Several of the questions were also derived from Choy's (1993) study of a Japanese bilingual bicultural program. Interviews were scheduled by email and/or phone contact. The researcher scheduled public meeting locations that were conducive to facilitating a productive session for parent participants.

### **Audio Recording**

Interviews were audio taped and scheduled to last no more than 1 hour in duration (see Appendix C). Chandler, Anstey, and Ross (2015) stated that "incorporating an audio component to qualitative research dissemination has the potential to offer audiences a unique way to more fully engage with the data and reflect on the interpretations and analytic process of the researcher" (p. 4).

If participants were unable to meet face to face, phone interviews were suggested as an alternative method and were recorded using the loud speaker setting.

### **Language Accommodations: Use of Translators**

Interpreters were solicited for parents who were not fluent with speaking the English language. Surveys were translated in accordance with partner languages offered at each school. According to Berman and Tyyskä (2011), the use of translators in research is conducive to ensuring investigative practices are inclusive and equitable for participants.

### **Data Analysis**

After the onset of the data collection process, transcripts were coded broadly

according to research area. As these data are accumulated, codes and coding were revised according to themes. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher constructed a matrix that illustrated abbreviated responses of each participant to every individual interview question. The researcher then color coded responses according to the research question. A matrix was constructed from data for each research question to identify patterns of perceptions, trends across language groups, or any area where there are misconceptions or misinformation. In all phases of data collection and analysis, the researcher reviewed transcripts and listened to tapes to make sure all important and relevant themes were included in the analysis. From the matrices of parent responses, the researcher analyzed themes that define their perceptions, goals and beliefs of the dual language program in answer to Research Question 1. For Research Question 2, the researcher followed a similar procedure, as these items provided peripheral information to the first question delivering background information on parents and their educational experiences. Throughout the analysis, the researcher built from the conceptual framework and related the information to what was necessary in order to understand why parents choose dual language immersion programs. These findings are detailed in Chapter 4.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the research design that was used to facilitate the study. The chapter detailed the research design, participants, and data sources. The procedures that were followed as well as the qualitative data collection and analysis techniques that were employed are explained. Chapter 4 details the results as they relate to each of the research questions.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

Chapter 4 features results depicting findings of why parents choose Spanish dual language immersion programs to educate their children. Nineteen parents volunteered to participate in this study. Twelve parents of students interviewed primarily speak the English language. Seven parents of students interviewed primarily speak the partner language of Spanish. The detail of this study is designed to conclude why parents choose dual language immersion programs to educate their children. Findings are intended to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the motivations for parents to enroll their child in a dual language immersion language program?
  - 1.1 What educational goals do immersion parents have for their child?
  - 1.2 What perceptions and expectations do parents have for their child's immersion program?
  - 1.3 Do beliefs about the dual language immersion programs influence parents' decision?
2. What are the stated factors that influence immersion parents' decision-making?
  - 2.1 Does an immersion parent's own school experience influence his/her decisions?
  - 2.2 Does an immersion parent's role perception influence his/her decision?

Results illustrated in this chapter follow Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) revised parental involvement model and research conducted by Walker et al. (2005). Findings are framed by the above research questions and categorized by sections to



highlight subjective factors that contribute to parental decisions when selecting academic settings for their children. The complete set of transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix C.

### **Research Question 1**

What are the motivations for parents to enroll their child in a dual language immersion language program?

### **Parental Educational Goals**

This section examines findings from Research Sub-Question 1.1 which evaluates educational goals parents have for their children. Two interview questions specifically addressed Research Question 1: What made you decide to enroll your child in this program? What educational goals do you have for your child? See Appendix B for a list of parent interview questions.

Table 3 illustrates the most frequently mentioned parental choice options for the Spanish language immersion program.

Table 3

#### *Parent Choice Options for the Spanish Language Immersion Program*

Descriptors	Frequency
Learn a Second Language	19
Academic Benefits	19
College Readiness	10
Career Readiness	9
Social Emotional Development	3
Cultural Connection	16

**Learn a second language.** Many of the parents interviewed for this study pointed out their ambitions toward the importance of their child learning a second language. P17 stated, “It is very important for him to speak two languages. I think it opens doors.” P8

concurred: “My child’s future will benefit greatly if he fluently speaks both languages.”

Based on responses from most of the parents, they are aware of the advantages of learning a second language and how bilingualism can contribute to their child’s future.

P11 elaborated,

Because of the change in environment we have in our country, Spanish is becoming more prominent and widely accepted now. So I want my child to get a good start and being in that age, she's able to soak in as much knowledge as she can that I thought would be a good opportunity for her to learn both languages.

One parent (P1) of a kindergarten student explained how attending a Spanish immersion program would enhance her son’s opportunity: “We felt like Spanish was a good choice because there’s so many Spanish speakers just in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida so we thought this could be a skill that he can apply later in life.” P13 agreed with the notion that learning to speak Spanish will enable her children a broad spectrum to connect across communities:

I wanted my children to be able to speak the Spanish language because a high number of people speak Spanish. It’s like a second language in our society, so I wanted them to be able to communicate in both languages.

Many parents wanted their children to be able to have limitless possibilities as they prepare for their futures. P11 suggested, “Learning a second language can only benefit my child in the long run. It provides options.” Postsecondary opportunities were made clear as P9 related reasons why she chose a Spanish immersion program: “I wanted to have something that was going to challenge my kid educationally. My husband and I just felt that learning Spanish would help further their life after graduation.”

**Academic benefits.** End-of-grade assessments administered in the state of North Carolina serve as an indicator of what students have learned during the current school year. P16 mentioned, “I want my child to be successful on end-of-grade testing. I am proud that she’s been doing really well in reading and learning in a second language.” During interviews, many parents shared their own education experience in a traditional setting was “less than out of the box thinking” (P4) and “just regular and average as far as learning” (P9). These parents chose the Spanish immersion program as they wanted their children to experience a more progressive form of education. P14 explained, “I enrolled my daughter in this program to ensure that she achieves better academic results.” The aim of many parents interviewed was to ensure their children attend a school in an environment that will inspire them to reach their maximum potential. P7 affirmed, “I wanted to choose a program that will make the most impact in my child’s development.” There were a few parents who moved to the area from out of the state of North Carolina. P12 recently moved to this area from the west coast and maintained they have “seen positive academic results that Spanish immersion programs have on children and jumped on the opportunity to enroll our child.”

A nurturing environment is key to the immersion choice option explained P4: “I want to make sure that my daughter is challenged in reading and math. Finding teachers who can help encourage her to have a positive outlook on her learning is important to me.” Parents wanted to ensure their children’s aptitude in core skills are appropriately developed to compete for postsecondary opportunities. P10 went on to suggest, “I want my son to have a strong foundation in reading because this will allow him to go into whatever he wants later in life.” Many parents concluded that their desire was for their

children to achieve at high levels in order to be competitive in their futures. P9 declared,

We push our kids to excel. To not just learn what is given to them for that specific grade level. Right now, my child is reading at the goal expectations for the end of the year. We pride ourselves on high standards and teach our kids that average is not good enough.

**College readiness.** Parents shared the importance of foreign language learning and their aspiration of seeing their child advance to postsecondary educational institutions after graduating high school. Parents believe that sending their children to a Spanish immersion program will improve their readiness for college. Thirteen interviewed parents claimed to have earned a 4-year degree/beyond, asserting their expectations is for their children to have a similar level of education. P13 attended a 4-year higher learning institution and professed that “I want my children to go to college” as the primary reason why she chose the Spanish immersion program. P1 is a college graduate and validated this notion during her interview, stating, “I want to make sure that my son continues language learning through high school to really solidify the language. This will broaden his options for college.”

There were also parents interviewed who chose to embark on a career field upon graduating high school. Due to these experiences, parents stated the belief that “having a college education will take their children further in life” (P18). P17 “entered the career field soon after graduating high school and chose to enroll her children in the Spanish immersion program because she aspires for her children to go to college.” P5 passionately affirmed, “I definitely want all of my children to go to college and get a college degree. I want them to have as high a level of education as possible.” P11

pointed to the fact that she wants her children to “at least complete undergraduate school and walk away with a four-year degree.” Because her child attends an internationally minded environment, P11 further pointed out that “her child’s academic skills will improve.” P6 agreed that she chose the Spanish immersion program to ensure her child goes to college because “being bilingual will improve my daughter’s skill development needed to earn a graduate level degree.”

**Career readiness.** Several parents chose the Spanish immersion program to enable their children broader career options after graduation. P10 shared why he chose the Spanish immersion program: “I want my son to pursue whatever he is interested in doing in life when he is in the workforce.” Many parents agreed that being bilingual is a good skill to have in order to compete in the job market. P17 affirmed that receiving a bilingual education will ensure that his son has “a good profession.” Similarly, P5 agreed that having a dual language education will “provide his child with an occupational advantage.” Many parents interviewed, based on primary experiences, believe their children will have an edge above peers who do not speak the Spanish language. P6 declared that being bilingual will make her children “more marketable so they will make more money in the job market”; and P4 concurred by stating, “I am confident there is no other language that will provide my child with an edge in the future job market.”

All parents interviewed want their child to be able to be in control of and choose their own destiny. P3 stated, “I want my son to have access to what he wants to do at the end of high school. I want him to have options to go in whatever direction he wants without limitations.” Many parents went on to suggest that industries primarily hire employees who speak multiple languages at a higher rate. P12 indicated, “I want my son

to be able to sit down at a job interview and land the job due to him being able to speak both languages.” P2 shared how being bilingual benefited her. by affirming,

I want my daughter to know more than one language because that has opened a lot of doors for me so I want her to have the same opportunities that I’ve had. At every job that I’ve held since I have come to the United States, the interviewer told me that they just need to hire someone that speaks Spanish.

**Social emotional development.** Parents interviewed wanted their children to be well-rounded citizens and able to transfer soft skills such as empathy, teamwork, and communication as they interact socially in any environment. Multiple parents identified the importance of “social emotional skill development” (P14) as a key factor for choosing a Spanish immersion program. P12 shared that one of many benefits his children are receiving while attending a Spanish immersion program is the heightened “social aspects of whether his children meet friends and be able to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.” P3 provided further insight toward this choice option:

We were moving here from Massachusetts and we wanted to keep our son back for social emotional reasons. Intellectually, he was way ahead of his peers so we had to find a program that served as a challenge academically as well as nurture historical development.

**Cultural connection.** Many of the parents interviewed expressed their desire for their children to be able to connect with their primary and subsequent cultures. Several parents stated that they want their child to “learn and develop an appreciation of different cultures” (P15). P2 shared, “My native language is Spanish and since my daughter’s

family is English speaking, I thought that it would be really good for her to actually practice the language both at my and her father's home." In support of sustaining the Spanish culture and family tradition, P10 stated,

My son's ethnicity is partly that of the Spanish culture. I thought that by enrolling him in this program would be a great way to help him have the part of culture and his heritage that I don't have as an American woman. This program also will provide my son an advantage in further developing community relations and job opportunities that he would have knowing a second language.

P16 is a native of the Spanish culture and stated, "I wanted my daughter to be able to learn from someone outside of the household that is skilled in grammar and can provide the correct way of speaking the Spanish language." P18 shared her excitement about the opportunity of enrolling her children in this program as it will "maintain their learning of the Spanish and English cultures." Although the traditional model is offered as an alternative option at the school site, there were a few parents of children who chose the Spanish immersion program because it is their "neighborhood school" (P19).

### **Summary**

The findings from this section illustrate parent aspirations to secure a solid academic foundation for their child to "learn and grow" (P15). Learning a second language while building executive, social emotional, and cultural skills provides a perspective that will inspire students to "be excited about learning" (P16), "challenge kids educationally" (P9), think critically, and be ready to compete on a global scale upon graduating high school. P11 stated, "I want my child to get a good start in her education and to be able to soak in as much information as she can." The alternative modality of

education that is Spanish immersion provides students with varied experiences to improve their overall development which lends to “more possibilities in life” (P6).

The majority of parents interviewed were American natives who primarily speak the English language. During the interviews, both English and Spanish speaking parents shared a common goal for their children to “go to college” (P18), “have a good profession” (P17), and “be successful in their futures” (P18). P11 shared the Spanish immersion program has “been a very positive experience for his family.” Collectively, parents expressed their passion for their children to become happy, independent, and well-rounded citizens. Parents were very thrilled about the Spanish immersion program at CAF Elementary School and were proud of the “nurturing” (P16) and “family oriented” (P9) environment the school provided for their children.

### **Parent Viewpoint and Expectations**

This section audits findings from Research Question 1.2, which targets the context of parent viewpoint, expectations, and recruitment as it pertains to the Spanish immersion program. The following interview questions were answered by parents: Please use three words to describe your child’s school experience. What are your expectations of the school and the program? What would you tell an interested parent about this school? See Appendix B for a list of parent interview questions.

Table 4 presents descriptors of student experiences most frequently mentioned by parents.



Table 4

*Descriptors of Student Experiences*

Descriptors	Frequency
Fun	10
Challenging	9
Exciting	8
Innovative	4
Beneficial	4
Interactive	5
Positive	5

A large percentage of parents experienced difficulty when answering this question. The majority of parents described the Spanish immersion program as being fun, challenging, and exciting. These responses were derived from most of the parents of students attending kindergarten through fourth grades. Additional descriptors communicated were innovative, beneficial, interactive, and positive. All parents shared their satisfaction regarding how happy and excited their children are about learning. P1 stated, “My son is excited and motivated to learn. He generally has fun and enjoys the program.”

The relationships built between school and community were evident based on parent acknowledgement regarding how passionate they were when communicating about the positive impact the Spanish immersion program has on their children. Parents routinely expressed how impressed they were with the CAF staff and the collaborative and nurturing culture. P2 affirmed that “It’s like a family here. They really care about the kids and I just love this school.” Parents were pleased with the growth they see in their children since enrolling in the immersion program. P6 concurred with how “wonderful” the program is and further expressed how much she “loves it.” P8 shared how “excited” her daughter is to be with other students in her class each day. Students

attending Spanish immersion programs are able to learn about and be a part of diverse cultures, traditions, and social behaviors. Being able to speak dual languages enables students to develop different perspectives that will enrich their lives. P3 shared that her daughter is like a “social butterfly” since joining this program; and P9 is happy that her daughter “likes learning” and “enjoys being with the teachers and students.”

Table 5 illustrates frequently mentioned parent program expectations descriptors.

Table 5

*Frequency of Parent Program Expectations*

Descriptors	Frequency
Language Fluency	12
Content Development	17
Cultural Awareness	6
Safety	9
Program Expansion	10

**Expectations.** Common expectations communicated by the majority of parents interviewed were in the areas of language fluency and content development. P1 wanted to make sure that her son is “fluent enough to carry on a conversation in both languages.” P3 reported that she would like for her son to feel “confident enough to use his fluency in his writing as well as his speech.” Similarly, P15 stated, “I expect my child to continue learning core skills and advance toward fluency while communicating in the Spanish language.” P5 mentioned, “I expect for my children to learn the best way possible. I know that every student is different. So, generally, I expect a school to figure out what works best for each child and use those techniques.”

Parent intentions for their child’s improvement of cultural awareness skills were expressed during interviews. P9 went on to say, “I want my children to be able to connect with people outside of their ethnicity.” P16 shared her satisfaction with the

diverse staff and curriculum activities and is “very pleased with the program. My daughter had a teacher from Chile, she’s had a teacher from Columbia and they get to learn about the teacher’s country and culture.” Many parents expect for “teachers and staff in this program to encourage children to work on their social skills” (P14) to be able to effectively “interact with friends from other cultures” (P12).

Safety and program growth were a top expectancy for P4 as he shared that his “primary motive for this school is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment where my children are able to grow both as people as well as intellectually.” In regard to program expansion, P8 concluded, “I would like to see the program extend through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I would like to see more kids get involved with this program.”

**Recruitment.** Parents were asked to provide feedback regarding what they would share with interested parents about the Spanish immersion program. Answers varied in context ranging from the benefits of improved cultural knowledge to academic development to diversity. P7 suggested, “I would tell parents to go for it! The teachers are awesome and I like that they are from different countries.” P1 stated, “We are very pleased with the program and our son loves it. He has done very well in his overall development.” P6 explained that she will tell interested parents that “CAF is a very good school and they should enroll their kids there because speaking another language is a good skill for kids to have.” P8 confirmed that she would point out the fact that “This is a different world of which we live, you should enroll your child to learn something new.” P18 would relate to native Spanish speakers by stating that she chose this program “to teach my child about our culture.”

Parents expressed their gratitude toward the positive environment this program

offers their children. P13 went on to say how “awesome” the Spanish immersion program was for her children. CAF was described by P14 as being “a top-notch school.” Most parents want their children to be able to embark on any option desired after high school. P14 declared the “Spanish immersion program will prepare children for their futures.” P12 is happy with the “positive experience the Spanish Immersion program has provided” and agrees that her family’s experience at CAF has been “fantastic and has been everything we have expected.” Many parents continued to give an account on how much they love CAF; specifically, P16 was grateful for “all the staff has done for my child.” P18 stated the Spanish immersion program at CAF is “the best idea” that is “going to open doors for our kids.” This sentiment was routinely shared by parents. P19 also mentioned that “every parent should enroll their child in a program that teach them a new language to help their future” and by doing so “they will have a good life.”

Multiple parents expressed their approval for the nurturing environment that is established at this Spanish immersion program site. P3 confirmed,

You can’t go wrong. My son has an amazing time here. He is nurtured in his learning the way he needs and is being encouraged to do his best. It’s a good school and I can’t believe it’s a public school. I see all the kids at the school being treated with respect every time I visit. It’s a really nice place to send your child.

P5 mentioned, “The staff is extremely friendly, caring and very attentive to each student. It’s not just a process, it feels like they are genuinely concerned about the kid’s education and their wellbeing.” P9 also indicated that she “has no complaints about CAF” and enjoys the “family oriented” and “challenging” environment they provide.

Parents expressed their approval for the innovative ways in which their children are learning. P11 stated, “You should take interest in a program that is trying to do something different. Different is good and you will never know the benefits unless you try it.” Multiple parents stated their opinion about how beneficial the Spanish immersion program is to children. P19 emphasized that “every parent should enroll their child in a program that teach students a new language to help their development. Your child will have a good life.”

### **Summary**

Parents shared their expectations for the Spanish immersion program at CAF. Parents interviewed agreed the “school really pushes the kids” (P9). P10 “expects for the Spanish immersion program to hold high expectations for my child’s achievement.” The level of parent engagement at CAF is very high and parents collectively declared that “I plan to be involved” (P10). Parents are committed to providing opportunities for their children’s success as CAF “sets trends” (P11) for the future. P12 concluded, “I want my children to be able to speak and converse in Spanish when they go to their job.” P17 was drawn to tears, stating, “the opportunity for children to learn a second language is the best present that we can give them.” Parents with Spanish backgrounds expressed how pleased they were with the Spanish immersion program and how excited they were about their children learning “about their own culture” (P18).

Parents were also pleased with the leadership and staff at the school and enjoy the “diverse environment” (16) their child attends each day. P11 is looking forward to “each school adopting the Spanish immersion model because it has so many benefits.” There is a very high level of trust on the part of the parents toward the school staff. Parents

expressed how proud they were of their child's development and learning since enrolling in the CAF Spanish immersion program.

### **Parents' Beliefs about the Spanish Language**

This section reviews responses from Research Question 1.3, which illustrate the types of contacts and experiences parents had with the Spanish language. This section also investigates parents' feelings towards the Spanish language. The following interview questions were answered by parent parents: Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language? What contacts/experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program? What are your feelings towards the Spanish language? See Appendix B for a list of parent interview questions.

Table 6 illustrates parent perspective regarding influential factors that contributed to their decision for choosing a dual language immersion program.

Table 6

*Influential Factors that Contributed to Parents' Decisions for Choosing a Dual Language Immersion Program*

Parent	Why did you choose Spanish language immersion?	Contacts/Experiences with the Spanish Culture	Feelings towards Spanish
P1	#1 Spoken Language	Bilingual Preschool	Awesome
P2	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	I love Spanish
P3	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	Neutral
P4	#1 Spoken Language	Social Interactions	Great Language
P5	#1 Spoken Language	CAF	I love Spanish
P6	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	I love Spanish
P7	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	Good Language
P8	#1 Spoken Language	Social Interactions	Good Language
P9	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	Great Language
P10	#1 Spoken Language	Professional & Social	Neutral
P11	#1 Spoken Language	Travel	Empowering
P12	Neighborhood School	Professional Interactions	Neutral
P13	#1 Spoken Language	Social Interactions	Fun
P14	Good Program for Kids	Social Interactions	Fun
P15	Good Program for Kids	Social Interactions	Adaptive
P16	#1 Spoken Language	Social Interactions	Adaptive
P17	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	I like it
P18	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	I like it
P19	Maintain Culture	Primary Culture	I like it

**Most common second language spoken and maintain the Spanish culture.**

Multiple parents interviewed affirmed their choosing a Spanish immersion program to educate their child is primarily due to high numbers of citizens speaking this language in the United States. According to P4, "Spanish is the number one foreign language spoken in the United States." P1 stated, "I felt like this is the most usable language in our area. My son can learn the language and grow academically." P5 is exposed to the Spanish language on a daily basis and has "been around Spanish speakers more frequently than any other language, so I hear it more often than I do any other language." P9 is "connected with the Spanish language in church" and believes that "Spanish is

astronomically needed in these days and times.”

Native Spanish speaking parents interviewed expressed their motivation for choosing a Spanish immersion program is to maintain their culture. P10 explained, “My son has a Hispanic background, so we wanted to make sure that he learned in an environment that can teach him the culture and language.” P18 confirmed that Spanish is her “native language” and “want to make sure that her son continues to fluently speak the Spanish language.”

**Contacts and experiences.** Parents were tasked to provide their personal accounts of exposure to the Spanish language. P5 pointed out that he does not “have any exposure to the Spanish language other than his child’s enrollment in the CAF Spanish immersion program.” Remaining parents have primary interaction due to being of Hispanic descent or by interacting socially or in the workplace. P2 shared, “I am from Puerto Rico so my native language is Spanish. We don’t visit often because it’s very expensive. But when we do visit, my daughter is very comfortable with the language.” P7 concluded that she is a native Spanish speaker, “grew up in a Spanish speaking country,” and is “excited about this opportunity because my children are native English speakers and are speaking Spanish a lot at home and we can practice the language with them.” Many parents agreed to having friendships with native Spanish speakers and choosing a Spanish immersion program “helped to encourage their decision” (P9). P11 pointed out his aspiration of attaining the bilingual skill: “I am a Native English Speaker but I interact with Spanish communities on a routine basis. My daughter’s attendance in this program is pushing me to learn the language as well.”

**Feelings towards Spanish.** When asked about feelings toward the Spanish



language, several parents were positive toward the Spanish language, asserting that “it’s actually a good language” (P8). P6 agreed that she “loves it” and “it’s a pretty language to speak.” P5 identified by “having a diverse background and being exposed to a lot more languages. I most definitely want my children to incorporate this skill in their learning experience.” Many parents shared that the Spanish language is the most spoken foreign language in this area. P4 shared, “It’s great to be able to communicate with others in a different language because it’s so often spoken.” P1 thinks the Spanish immersion program is “really cool” and is “proud of how her son has learned so much, it’s like he is a native of a Spanish-speaking country. His accent is spot-on and he speaks fluently.” Many parents shared their vivid interests in having their child become a multicultural and global citizen. P9 declared, “Spanish is something that’s absolutely needed especially for English-speaking people. We can travel to other countries and communicate. We need to push ourselves and meet other people’s needs outside of just the English language.” Many parents agreed that being able to speak multiple languages is empowering. P12 went on to state, “Just like I teach my students; I’d say that you are empowered by having more than one language. I am trying to teach that concept to my own kids now until they understand that speaking multiple languages is power.” Most parents agreed that the Spanish language is “spoken all around the world; not just Mexico, Central America and South America” (P16). P9 suggested that by learning the Spanish language, “You are able to communicate with so many more people.”

During interviews, there were parents who were “neutral about the Spanish Language” (P13). Many parents expressed their desire for integration and having their children be able to participate in a globalized society. P3 explained,

To be perfectly honest I don't have a feeling. I just know that it's a part of our world. Spanish is the one prominent language next to English. I believe that if I don't want to take that interest and learn the Spanish language voluntarily, then it's going to be something in the future where I'll probably not have that type of option.

### **Summary**

Parents interviewed were asked about their feelings towards the Spanish language. Some parents shared positive perspective to the Spanish language as being “different” (P15), “fun” (P14), “absolutely needed” (P9), and “great for people to be able to speak more than one language” (P3). There were a few parents who shared a neutral position toward the Spanish language. P13 stated, “I don't really have any feelings towards it. We all have different languages and that's their language.” Although parents had varied perspectives, the common theme from recorded responses concluded value that is added to a person fluent with speaking the Spanish language. P16 suggested, “You're just able to communicate with so many more people by learning this particular language.” Many parents who maintain a positive perspective toward the Spanish language are “native Spanish speakers” (P18) or have exposure to individuals who speak the language on a routine basis at “work” (P13), through building “childhood friendships” (P14), “everyday social interactions” (P11), or “travel” (P12). The remaining parents have similar exposure to the primary language and hold common beliefs that learning the Spanish language is beneficial to everyday life.

### **Research Question 2**

What are the stated factors that influence immersion parents' decision-making?

## Parents' Own School Experience

This section examines findings from Research Sub-Question 2.1 which evaluates the schooling experiences of parents and how the impact from these experiences influenced their choice model for their children's education. Two interview questions specifically addressed this question: What was your own schooling experience like? Do you think your own school experience has influenced your schooling decisions for your child? See Appendix B for a list of parent interview questions.

Table 7 illustrates most frequently mentioned perspectives about how a parent's own school experiences influenced their decision for choosing a Spanish immersion program.

Table 7

### *Parents' Perspectives about School Experiences*

Parent	School System Attended	What was your own school experience like?	Did your schooling influence decisions for your child?
P1	Public & Private	Positive	No
P2	Abroad	Strict	No
P3	Public	Less Diversified	Yes
P4	Public	Less Diversified	Yes
P5	Public	Positive	Yes
P6	Abroad	Positive	Yes
P7	Public	Positive	Yes
P8	Public	Positive	Yes
P9	Public	Positive	Yes
P10	Public	Positive	No
P11	Public	Positive	Yes
P12	Public	Positive	No
P13	Public	Positive	No
P14	Public	Positive	Yes
P15	Public	Positive	No
P16	Abroad & Public	Challenging	Yes
P17	Public	Challenging	No
P18	Public	Positive	Yes
P19	Public	Positive	No

The majority of parents interviewed received their primary and secondary education in a public school. There were a few parents who did not provide positive accounts regarding their own school experiences. All parents expressed how they “want a better education” (P15) for their children and this desire was a key factor that contributed to the decision for choosing the Spanish immersion program. P17 confirmed his own school experience “was hard” and “did not feel like anyone was there to push him or anything.” P4 further described his schooling as “less out of the box thinking and less diversified.” Many parents recounted their school experience as “regular and average as far as learning” (P9). Some parents shared how they “moved around a lot and grew up going to a lot of different schools” (P4). There were several parents who concluded their school experience “was just okay” (P19). Native Spanish speaking parents expressed challenges while attending American schools as a child, due to their limited English language skills. According to P16, “My schooling experience was very different because I came not knowing any English. I enrolled in school in fourth grade and at that time there weren’t any ESL programs.”

Many parents also indicated they “enjoyed school while growing up” (P15). P7 stated that her “school was fun,” and P14 agreed that she attended “a good school district.” There were parents who stated their school “prepared them to go to college” (P5). Many parents grew up in a small city and were able to “attended a diverse high and middle school” (P13). P12 shared, “I had a great school experience. I came from a very small town and there were a lot of languages spoken where I was from.” There were parents who were limited in their cultural exposure. P3 indicated, “I attended very small school in the middle of nowhere with very little diversity.”

There were parents who confirmed primary exposure to public, private, and schools abroad while growing up. This information provided further insight as to their thought process for choosing a Spanish immersion program. P1 went on to state, “I attended public school in kindergarten through third grade and moved to a private Christian school from fourth grade on.” There were a few parents who attended primary and secondary school in Spanish speaking countries. P2 shared, “I went to school in Puerto Rico so it was very different than here. Kids had to buy books and uniforms each year.” P6 indicated, “I grew up and went to school in Mexico but my school experience was good.”

P16 “experienced the benefits bilingualism can bring. We are bilingual and this skill has brought value to our lives.” There were a few parents who claimed, “The Spanish immersion program is located in my neighborhood but would have chosen a Spanish immersion program even if it weren’t” due to their schooling experiences (P18 & P19). P4 voiced her decision-making process for choosing a Spanish immersion program:

Spanish Immersion influenced my research and interest in where she would attend. We looked at private schools and public schools and their offerings. Schooling is so much different now. There are so much more options in where they can go. I thought about the types of families that my daughter will be around each day. Not only will she be with different teachers’ eight hours a day, she will be with 20-30 other students also. I wanted to make sure that my child’s character is properly developed. I visited the Spanish Immersion program and walked the halls before making my decision. This was important. I am happy that I chose

this program and have been pleased with what the Spanish Immersion program has done for my child.

All parents wished they had the opportunity to attend a program like this during their childhood. P1 explained, “We didn’t have anything like this growing up. I thought this would be a good opportunity for my son to learn about other cultures and languages.” Bilingualism and biliteracy along with other noted motivations seemed to be most important to parents. P2 confirmed, “The language immersion aspect of the program influenced my decision to send my child to this school.”

Real world connections served as a major influence to parents. P12 expressed, “Life experiences after school is what really promoted my decision. I did a lot of traveling and work overseas after I finished college. Those experiences were what really shaped part of my idea to enroll my children in this program.”

P9 concurred and went on to state,

“Learning after school is what the meat of life is about. It is worth more than what you learn inside of that building. I realized that my children needed to receive their education in a challenging environment that will also educate them. They will take what they have learned in the Immersion program and apply it to their lives, wherever they go and to what ever they do.”

Several parents stated the Spanish immersion program is their “neighborhood school” and they “would have chosen this school even if it weren’t” (P10).

## **Summary**

Throughout parent interviews, there were various factors that were considered prior to choosing the Spanish immersion program as their child’s schooling option.

Multiple parents agreed that their own primary and secondary experiences while attending schools in traditional, nondiverse, or unsupported environments have influenced their educational choice for their children to “have a chance to learn in a different way” (P16). It is through these experiences that participants’ schooling decisions were shaped. There were parents who chose Spanish immersion as an alternative form of education as they themselves have benefited from it. P6 stated, “I have a good job now because I am bilingual.” There were also parents who chose the Spanish immersion program because of the “challenging experience to learn English” (P16) or because “they weren’t exposed to a lot of other languages spoken in the area of which they grew up” (P12).

Some parents “researched private schools and public schools and compared what these institutions had to offer” (P4). “It’s just more than what you learn inside of that building,” stated P9 as she expressed her reasons for sending her child to a Spanish immersion program were due to what she learned in life outside of the structure of education. Overall, these parents want their children to experience a better quality of learning in a diverse, “tight-knit” (P3) and rigorous environment.

### **Parents’ Role Perception**

This section examines findings from Research Sub-Question 2.2 which evaluates the focus on the role perceptions parents have on social skill development. One interview question specifically addresses this assertion: Where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills? See Appendix B for a list of parent interview questions.

Table 8 illustrates most frequently mentioned descriptors regarding parents’ role perception of where the responsibility lies in teaching their children social skills.

Table 8

*Parents' Role Perception of Responsibility*

Descriptors	Frequency
Home & School	12
Home	7

Many parents agreed that the “responsibility of teaching their child social skills lies with the parent” (P16). P9 concurred, “I feel the responsibility absolutely lies at home. We need to put the responsibility on parents and be active with our kids learning and development.” Parents collectively valued their role in their children’s development. P8 declared, “Teaching my child social skills is my responsibility because everything pretty much starts at home.”

Remaining parents agreed that the responsibility of teaching their child social skills lies with the parent and school. According to P10,

The responsibility is primarily the parents. The school has a role to play also.

The school environment is really good for him as far as learning how to relate to other people and learning how to be considerate of others. Parents and teachers should partner with teaching children this skill.

P12 mentioned, “Educators need to help guide students into what is right and wrong especially for working with their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. One of the goals in this county is for students to be able to socialize in diverse environments.” P6 indicated, “School has the responsibility of teaching our children, but I will think the major responsibility falls on the parents.” P3 chose the Spanish immersion program at CAF Elementary School because “the staff seems to genuinely care more about education than discipline. They approach discipline positively as opposed to punishment which helps kids learn how to



appropriately behave and interact with each other.”

### **Summary**

Parents interviewed expressed their perception as it pertains to where the responsibility lies when teaching students social skills. Several parents interviewed expressed their view on this topic as being the responsibility of the parent and school. These parents believe they are primarily responsible with teaching their children the appropriateness of how to interact with others; however, they acknowledged their expectation for the school to “hold up their end of the bargain” (P3). Parents mentioned that schools are also responsible for teaching students “how to play kindly with friends” (P10) through daily activities and projects. Several parents feel that teaching children social skills “starts in the home” (P1) and the classroom should be “secondhand to teaching our kids social skills” (P9).

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, a detailed description of findings was presented as parents gave an account of each research question. The stated motivations for parents to enroll their children in a Spanish language immersion program as well as the stated factors that influence such decision-making were presented in a qualitative design. Chapter 5 correlates research presented in Chapter 2 with data collected and presented in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This chapter seeks to correlate research presented in Chapter 2 and with data presented in Chapter 4. A brief overview of the study, the research questions, and methodology are presented prior to producing the results, implications for practice, and recommendations for further investigation derived from studying dual language immersion education.

### **Overview of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative design study was to determine why parents choose dual language immersion programs. The participating school is located in the south central region of North Carolina. Launched in 2015, the participating school is the district's first established Spanish dual language immersion program.

School choice is a national action that empowers parents to determine which type of education is most conducive to meeting the needs of their children which can serve in the construct of public, private, home, or religious institutions. School choice safeguards the constitutional rights of parents to appoint their children's training that aligns with core values in terms of ethics, religious beliefs, and principles (McShane, 2014).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) revised parental involvement model and research conducted by Walker et al. (2005) provided aligning perspective for assembling semi-structured interview questions. Several of the questions were also derived from Choy's (1993) study of a Japanese bilingual bicultural program. This study investigated responses from 19 parent interviews designed to answer, "What are the stated motivations for parents to enroll their child in an immersion language program?" and "What are the stated factors that influence immersion parents' decision-making?"

### Summary of Findings: Research Question 1

What are the motivations for parents to enroll their child in a dual language immersion program?

**Challenging environment.** Immersion parents in this study hold high aspirations to solidify a solid academic foundation for their children to “learn and grow” (P15). Parents in this study agreed that choosing language immersion will place their children in a challenging environment that will inspire them to “be excited about learning” (P16), think critically, and become globally competitive upon graduating high school. As illustrated in Chapter 3 (see Table 3), many of the parents interviewed were American natives who primarily speak the English language and claim to have achieved a college level degree or higher. According to research conducted by Cunningham, Erisman, and Looney (2007), parents who earn postsecondary degrees from collegiate institutions have high educational expectations for their children.

Many parents want their children to achieve at high levels in order to be competitive in life and chose the Spanish immersion program because they “want to have something that was going to challenge their children educationally” (p. 9). Carlson and Melzoff (2008) noted that children who are exposed to dual language instruction have significantly improved executive function and present advanced problem-solving skills and planning skills, are more goal oriented, and can monitor their own performance. Immersion parents want their children to learn in a more progressive environment. Parents want their children to learn in an environment that will “make the most impact in their child’s development” (P7). Skutnabb-Kangas et al. (2009) mention that bilinguals’ cognizance of language and their intellectual strategies are improved as a result of the

challenging communicative environment in which their bilingual capacities have advanced.

**College readiness.** Parents agreed that college readiness was the primary reason they chose to enroll their children in the Spanish immersion program. Thirteen parents claimed to have earned a 4-year degree/beyond and asserted their expectation for their children is to have a similar level of education. Native English and Spanish speaking parents agreed they chose the CAF Spanish immersion program to ensure their children are prepared to “go to college” (P18), “have a good profession” (P17), and be successful in their futures (P18). According to investigative studies, bilingual children have increased opportunities when it comes to choosing further education (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These students are able to choose to which university they want to apply and in which country, depending on the languages they speak (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Parents expressed they want their children to have the “highest level of education possible” (P5). P1 stated, “I want to make sure that my son continues language learning through high school to broaden his options for college.”

There were also parents who entered the career field after high school and selected the Spanish immersion program due to the belief that “having a college education will increase their children’s advantage” (P18). According to Howard et al. (2003), native English speaking parents agreed that dual language immersion programs offer an edge for students to solidify heightened opportunities after high school graduation, such as job options and college admissions. Because of the internationally minded environment that immersion programs perpetuate, parents agreed their children will be prepared to earn a graduate level degree and be able to compete in a global

society.

**Alternative learning environment.** Multiple studies have been conducted to determine the growing rate of languages other than English being spoken in homes of children and the developmental characteristics of dual-language learners (Carlson & Melzoff, 2008). The goal of providing their children an alternative form of education was communicated by a large number of interviewed parents. Several parents shared their own educational experiences were conducted in a “less than out of the box thinking” (P4) and “average” (P9) environment. Parents concurred they want their children to learn in an innovative environment which will prepare them for the next level of rigor. Several parents agreed this form of education is most relevant to meeting the expectation of their children receiving a quality education and “can’t believe this program is offered in a public school” (P11). Collectively, these parents agreed that it was due to their “traditional style” (P9) of education that added a major factor for choosing the dual language immersion program.

**Career opportunities.** In global studies, students with dual language skills stand out from peers to potential employees and are being recruited at high rates by international companies (Gándara, 2015). Several parents selected the Spanish immersion program to enable their children broader career options after graduation. Many parents agreed that “being bilingual is a good skill to have in order to compete in the job market” (P18). According to research studies, increased employment opportunities do not come from monolingual programs, rather from dual language programs (Porrás et al., 2014). Several parents affirmed that receiving a bilingual education will ensure their children will have “a good profession” (P17) and an

“occupational advantage” (P5). According to research findings from a study conducted by Rumbaut (2014), bilingual adults achieved elevated positions in their occupations and earnings. The more fluent in multiple languages, the higher the benefits. Several parents agreed that being able to speak multiple languages will make their children “more marketable so they can make more money in the job market” (P6). P12 confirmed, “she landed every job that she interviewed for since moving to the United States because she speaks the Spanish language.”

Experimental research in the past 20 years has uncovered the multitude of bilingual advantages and provided opportunities to individuals at all points along the lifespan (Kroll & Dussias, 2017). P10 went on to state that he wanted his son to have a “strong foundation in reading because this will allow him to go into whatever he wants in his future.” A number of parents concurred that the immersion program was a good choice for their children because “this is a skill that will benefit them after high school graduation” (P7).

**Academic success.** Several parents chose to send their children to the Spanish immersion program to ensure they achieve successful outcomes on “end-of-grade assessments” (P16). Collier and Thomas (2004) conducted a 4-year study which concluded native English speakers enrolled in a dual language immersion program outperformed their monolingual peers attending traditional programs. P9 agreed that “she enrolled her daughter in the Spanish immersion program to ensure that she achieved better academic results.” Maxwell (2015) found that students attending a dual language immersion school in North Carolina outscored their monolingual peers across the school district and state achieving at grade level or higher in math. A number of parents agreed

to have “seen positive academic results” and are proud their children are “improving in reading” (P16) since enrolling their children in the Spanish immersion program.

**Well-rounded citizen.** Parents agreed by enabling their children to advance through an institution that offered a dual-language context, their children will develop into well-rounded citizens. According to Lindholm-Leary (2005), dual language immersion programs provide enrichment-oriented curriculum that aims to develop high levels of bilingualism and positive cross-cultural views. Learning a second language enables advantages toward enhancing cultural proficiency. P12 wanted his children to be “able to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.” Lindholm-Leary (2005) conducted a study finding that students enrolled in a dual language immersion program developed cultural competencies while sustaining high standards for learning through a multi-cultural approach. These expectations lend to furthering students’ social interactions and relationship building.

**Second language fluency.** Exposing students to a second language speaking environment is significant toward acquiring mastery using foreign language skills needed to communicate (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008). Parents expressed their aspirations toward the increased benefits and potential outcomes for their children being fluent in speaking a second language. Lewis (2014) stated, “People who speak two languages may have brains that are more efficient at language processing and other tasks” (p. 1). P11 mentioned, “Spanish is becoming more prominent and a widely accepted language so he wants his child to get a good start on developing this skill.” Many parents indicated, “learning another language, especially Spanish, would help their children in the long run outside of just basic education” (P9). According to a study conducted by Barac and

Bialystok (2012), school readiness for dual language immersion students is enhanced through the development of linguistic skills.

Multiple parents stated this is a “different world” (P8) in which we live and parents “should enroll their children in the immersion program to learn something new.” Many parents described the Spanish immersion program at CAF as “a top-notch school” (P14) that will “prepare children for their futures” (P14). Research conducted by Walberg (2007) indicated,

Parents place high value on academic achievement when selecting school options and are communicating these educational advantages to other parents throughout their communities. These benefits conveyed by parents are primarily being used to drive the school reform discussion between the community, school districts and law makers.

Deussen (2014) suggested that methods of communication are increasingly significant due to a changing society. According to the United States Census Bureau (2017), one fifth of those over the age of 5 reported speaking a language other than English at home in 2007, an increase of 140% since 1980. Parents chose language immersion because they wanted to “ensure their children are fluent in speaking the Spanish and English languages” (P1) and “confident enough to use this fluency in writing” (P3). Bearse and Dejong (2008) affirmed in a research study that native English speaking students attending a language immersion school enjoy communicating with peers who speak different languages. Bilingualism further contributes to the productive development of the whole child. According to Barac and Bialystok’s (2012) language immersion study, bilingual children outperformed monolingual children on a number of



verbal and nonverbal tasks, showing that school readiness is enhanced through the development of linguistic skills.

Parents had a collective opinion regarding the importance of being able to communicate in Spanish due to the high numbers of citizens speaking this language in the United States. In 2011, Collier and Thomas (2012) found the total number of English learners residing in North Carolina represented 240 languages other than English, with Spanish being the most common language spoken (p. 65). English speaking parents interviewed claimed to be “around Spanish speakers more frequently than any other language” (P5) on a daily basis during social, professional, and religious encounters. These parents have close friendships with Spanish speakers and concurred that routine exposure to Spanish speakers “helped to encourage their decision” (P9). Parents also expressed a desire themselves to become bilingual as the Spanish immersion program “pushed them to learn how to communicate in Spanish” to better assist their children (P11).

Parents described Spanish as being “a good language” (P8), as they shared their feelings about this mode of communication. Most parents interviewed mentioned the desire for their children to become multicultural and global citizens. Many parents confirmed the Spanish program is “really cool” and that they are “proud of how their children have learned so much” (P1). Parents expressed the need for children to learn Spanish as this skill will “enhance student’s travel experiences” (P9) to be able to “help” (P17) and “communicate with so many more people when visiting abroad” (P16). Based on parents’ responses, they are aware of the ever-changing society in which we live. Many explained the necessity to speak the Spanish language is “part of our world; a

language that we will probably not otherwise have an option to speak in the future next to English” (P3).

**Cultural awareness.** Native Spanish speaking parents chose language immersion to ensure their children “learned in an environment that can teach them the culture” (P10) and “speak fluently the language” (P18). Several parents interviewed were of Hispanic descent. Giacchino-Baker and Piller (2006) found that families who are connected to the heritage language choose immersion programs to maintain language maintenance and development. Several native Spanish speaking parents suggested they can support their children’s communication skills in the home. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2009) stated that parents with a “strong command” of their family language improve knowledge of cultural traditions, values, and ethics. P2 is from Puerto Rico and fluently speaks Spanish. Choosing an environment for his daughter to learn the heritage language is a priority for him. He wants his daughter to be “comfortable with fluently speaking the Spanish language when they travel home to visit” (P2). P7 “grew up in a Spanish speaking country and is excited about the opportunity to practice speaking the language at home” as her children are native English speakers.

**Nurturing/caring environment.** During interviews, many parents described their children’s experience at CAF as being fun, challenging, and exciting (see Table 5); however, parents seemed to experience difficulty answering this question. These responses were communicated mostly by parents of students attending kindergarten through fourth grades. Innovative, beneficial, interactive, and positive were additional descriptors shared by parents regarding their children’s experience at CAF (see Table 5). Collectively, parents indicated how their children were “excited and motivated to learn”

(P1). According to Choy (1993),

Dialogues expressed by parents who liked to see their children happy to attend school described their experience as “fun” and “exciting.” These parents’ perspectives support the notion that students achieve at high levels when they are able to discover the joy of learning. (p. 98)

Parents stated they were “very happy” (P16 & P9) with the principal and staff at CAF Elementary School and were proud of the “nurturing” (P16) and “family oriented” (P9) environment maintained at the school. All parents interviewed were actively involved in their child’s education in and outside of the school environment. In a study conducted by Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000), language immersion parents demonstrate high levels of involvement in their children’s education. Parents also mentioned the desire to have their children educated in a “nurturing environment” (P3 & P7). P4 mentioned how important it is for her to “have her children attend the Spanish immersion program and be taught by a teacher who can encourage them to have a positive outlook on their learning.”

Parents communicated their expectations for their children’s continued improvement of cultural awareness skills. Parents are “very pleased with the Spanish immersion program at CAF Elementary School and the diverse staff” (P16). Parents expressed the ambition for their children “to be able to connect with people outside of their ethnicity” (P9). Deussen (2014) concluded in a research study that bilingual education gives students a wide perspective and primary interactions with diverse student populations which brings them closer to different races and nationalities. P14 agreed that she “wants her children to be able to interact with friends from other cultures.” In a study

conducted by Fortune et al. (2011), findings concluded that students attending a language immersion program affirmed high comfort levels interacting with groups who were different from them.

It was evident, based on parent acknowledgement, that healthy relationships were built between school and community. Sheldon (2002) found that having a cohort of parents and adults with common interests toward their children's education may reinforce parent involvement. Parents passionately expressed the positive impact the Spanish immersion program had on their children. P2 affirmed that "It's like a family here. They really care about the kids and I just love this school."

### **Summary of Findings: Research Question 2**

What are the stated factors that influence immersion parents' decision-making?

#### **Parents' Own School Experiences**

Räty (2002) asserted, parents' evaluative school recollections can be seen as one potential social-psychological factor in the chain through which the meaning of education is transferred from one generation to the next. Examining parents' school recollections help us, then, to better understand the dynamics of the social reproduction of education. (p. 388)

To gather further understanding of the decision-making process of parents, research from Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler's (1997) revised parental involvement model was used as an integral reference for this study. The majority of parents interviewed communicated very brief answers regarding their school experiences. There were a few parents who provided rich responses as they shared their personal educational experiences.

Language immersion selection for most parents is due to their “personal accounts and feelings about school” (Walker et al., 2005, p. 100). As detailed in Chapter 4 (see Table 8), the majority of interviewees confirmed receiving their primary and secondary education in a public school setting. There were some parents who attended school in private settings and abroad. All parents expressed how they “want a better education” (P15) for their children in a progressive environment. The majority of parents interviewed indicated “school was fun” (P7) and they “enjoyed school” (P15) while growing up. Parents claimed their school “prepared them for college” (P5), while several parents described their personal school experiences as being “hard” and lacked support as “there was no one there to push them” (P17). Many parents described their own schooling experience as being “just okay” (P19). There were a few Spanish speaking parents who agreed their personal schooling was “very difficult” (P16) because they traveled to the United States not knowing any English and followed the learning pathway for English as second language (ESL).

Several parents expressed “life experiences after school” shaped their decision to select language immersion. There were multiple parents who confirmed travel “overseas after college” (P12) enabled diverse “learning experiences after school” (P9) and that is what contributed to their decision-making process of choosing language immersion.

**Diverse learning environment.** Bilingual education gives students a wide perspective and primary interactions with diverse student populations that bring them closer to different races and nationalities (Deussen, 2014). All parents expressed wanting to expose their children to a “diverse” (P12) learning environment. Several parents stated their own learning environments were not “diverse” and want their children to experience

their overall development in an environment with “children from other cultures” (P11). This sentiment was common among all parents as they agreed upon the importance of diversity. Bilingual programs offer students competencies and confidence to interact with groups who are different from them (Fortune, et al., 2011). All parents agreed they were not offered “a program like this growing up and wished they had the opportunity to attend an immersion program during their childhood” (P1). P4 stated, “I probably would have been a better student if I attended a program like this one.”

**Social and emotional development.** The scope of social emotional learning is the desire for partnership between parent/school and social/emotional development and the capacity to identify and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others (Zins & Elias, 2007). Parents indicated their views regarding the responsibility of teaching their children social emotional skills. There were several parents who confirmed social emotional skills should be reinforced primarily in the home as “the responsibility should be put on parents to be active with their kid’s learning and development.” P8 agreed that teaching social emotional skills solely “starts in the home.”

Zins and Elias (2007) concluded, “

Effective schools that prepare students not only to pass tests at school but also to pass the tests of life are finding that social-emotional competence and academic achievement are interwoven and that integrated, coordinated instruction in both areas maximizes students’ potential to succeed in school and throughout their lives. (p. 235)

There were several parents who agreed strong partnerships need to be developed between

the “parent and school” (P10) when working to enhance their children’s social emotional skills. These parents agreed the responsibility of the school is to “teach students how to relate to other people and how to be considerate of others.” P12 indicated that “Educators need to help guide students into what is right and wrong.” Parents also agreed they chose the Spanish immersion program to “serve as a challenge academically as well as nurture their children’s social emotional development” (P3). According to research conducted by Roeser, Eccles, and Samoroff (2000), “In addition to educating students, schools are considered the central arena for social emotional health promotion and prevention” (p. 476).

### **Implications of Findings**

It is important for language immersion programs to effectively communicate their school’s vision with parents and how this vision parallels with parent expectations of organizational, academic/social emotional design structures, and outcomes across all grade levels. This can be ascertained by gathering data from a parent survey and/or interviews that prompt parents to share their expectations for their children’s educational exposure and outcomes. Wolfe (2003) stated that parents are a critical component and a reliable source of information regarding decisions made around the educational and language requirements for students. Parents “want their children to have a better education than they had while growing up” (P5, P7, P10, P15, P18, & P19) and expressed a desire for their children to develop skills needed to prepare them for the next level of rigor. According to Ramos (2007), immersion parents choose these programs primarily to give their children an edge in terms of academic enrichment and exposure to other languages and cultures. Parents collectively want their children to learn skills that are

conducive for them to have an advantage “later in life” (P1) and “increased options” (P11) and to be successful in “whatever field of study or occupation they choose” (P6). These parents are actively involved in their children’s education and will serve as a pivotal component with future recruitment efforts to further inform, establish, and sustain the immersion program.

Language immersion programs should communicate to parents probable outcomes in terms of end of grade level achievement demonstrated by students exposed to this modality of learning. Collier and Thomas (2012) found that immersion programs presents a full medium of learning that is conducive to closing the achievement gap compared to existing traditional programs. According to a study conducted by Lindholm-Leary (2001), language immersion programs yield heightened academic achievement outcomes as measured by state assessment data, whether native English or Spanish speakers are tested. High stakes assessment is a measure used by the state of North Carolina to verify school effectiveness. Parents understood the impact high stakes assessments have on their children’s school performance and grades. They expressed the importance for their children to be academically challenged and “prepared for end-of-grade assessments” (P16).

It is important to ensure the vision of the language immersion program aligns with postsecondary educational outcomes that meet the demands of parents. “College readiness” (P1, P2, P5, P6, P11, P13, P18, & P19) was most communicated as a key factor for parents choosing language immersion. Embedding foundational structures by setting benchmark goals in core subjects that align with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and correlate with collegiate standards of entry will meet the



expectations of parents regarding academic outcomes for students attending the language immersion program. This strategy may also inspire parents of monolingual students who are enrolled in traditional curriculum programs to enroll their children in the language immersion program. According to Lynch (2014), bilingual skills improve student preparedness for college and global market employment opportunities. Parents interviewed agreed they want their children to “learn academic skills that will prepare them to advance throughout their primary, secondary and post-secondary learning” (P10). Research conducted by Collier and Thomas (2004) has illustrated extensive findings to support high academic achievement outcomes acquired by students attending dual language immersion programs. This can give children more opportunities when it comes to choosing further education (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Language immersion programs will experience increased parental interest if the enhanced occupational benefits that a bilingual education can offer are marketed along with recruitment efforts. Gándara (2015) stated that in today’s global economy, students with dual language skills stand out from peers to potential employees and are being recruited at high rates by international companies. Parents agreed they chose language immersion to provide their children an “advantage when competing for postsecondary employment” (P10). Research findings illustrate that across all labor sectors, two thirds of employers confirmed selecting bilingual employees if their skills were comparable to their monolingual peers (Porrás et al., 2014). Many parents interviewed, based on primary experiences in the job market, believe their children will have an edge above peers who do not speak the Spanish language. Native Spanish speaking parents affirmed the advantage of having this skill provided them with “varied employment options and

security when competing for jobs after moving to the United States” (P2).

Efforts should be made for immersion programs to have events not only about the primary culture but about cultures represented at school and the community at large. These events can enrich cultural knowledge and bridge school and community relationships. Lindholm-Leary (2005) found immersion programs serve as an additive and enrichment-oriented curriculum that aims to develop high levels of bilingualism and positive cross-cultural views. Parents chose language immersion to enable their children advantages toward “enhancing cultural proficiency” (P10, P15, P16, & P18). By design, children and parents can benefit from immersion programs, as these settings can be a great place to foster cultural exchanges and celebrate multiculturalism during instructional and recreational activities and functions.

Immersion programs should ensure there is a balanced demographic ratio, with the makeup of the classroom population not falling below 30% for either language group when implementing and sustaining a program (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008). This strategy will ensure students who fluently speak the primary and partner language provide restorative language input to improve the development of language structures and skills, enabling students to process complex content delivered in the second language as they navigate the curriculum (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008). Parents chose the Spanish immersion program due to “how common the language is spoken throughout day-to-day activities next to the English language” (P4) and agreed with the expectation of their children being able to “fluently carry on conversations in both languages” (P1, P3, & P15). Many parents expressed how in the near future, “the ability to speak Spanish will be a life skill” (P1, P5, P7, P9, & P12); therefore, receiving a quality education in two

languages will ensure their children are prepared for their futures.

Collaborative communication is most important to maintain effective school/parent partnerships to ensure both stakeholder groups are adequately informed on how to best support the child inside and outside of the academic setting. Based on responses from several parents, awareness of program goals and structures was not apparent. It is key for schools to involve parents as they collaboratively drive the vision toward program development and implementation, because the backbone of many successful programs has been due to the advocacy of parents (Wolfe, 2003). Facilitating advocacy and support training for parents will provide them with strategies on how to best support their children with overall development needs. Parents mutually agreed to perceiving the Spanish language as an “important and beneficial life skill to have” (P11). They concurred this skill will expand their children’s communicative capacities in everyday life when traveling, in the work place, or with humanitarian and social functioning (P5, P2, P9, & P11). Ramos (2007) found that parents express their gratitude for the fundamental assets language immersion programs offer children in terms of academic enrichment as well as exposure to other languages and cultures. This factor will lend to furthering parental interest throughout language immersion recruitment efforts.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study sought to investigate why parents chose to send their child to a dual language immersion school. While specific to a single school site, several future research possibilities emerged from this study.

- Further research is needed to determine why parents do not choose dual

language immersion programs to educate their children. Many families of students who attend CAF Elementary School chose to opt out of the immersion program and maintain enrollment in the traditional program offered.

- Further research is needed to determine if students with special needs benefit from learning in a linguistically immersed environment. Research regarding students receiving accommodations and/or modifications and their participation in language immersion programs provide interesting data.
- This study was confined to the languages of English and Spanish. Additional studies would be beneficial to find if students attending immersion programs in languages such as Mandarin, French, and Japanese outperform their monolingual peers.
- As noted with this study, parents of students who attend immersion programs are aware of enhanced outcomes that a bilingual education will offer their children. Additional research is needed to learn if the expectations of parents are maintained throughout the duration of immersion program enrollment.
- A program evaluation would be beneficial to further investigate parent satisfaction; student, teacher, and administrator perceptions of the language immersion program; as well as student outcomes, including academic performance.
- A further study to examine if immersion parents stick to the commitment made at the onset of their child's enrollment can be conducted. In terms of ongoing parental involvement and dedication, an analysis to determine if dual language immersion programs maintaining initiatives that include parents in their

decision-making processes is recommended.

- This study involved a K-5 immersion program. A longitudinal study of parents of students extending enrollment through secondary schooling would provide further insight into shifts in perspective, academic performance of the students, and challenges and successes with establishing K-12 immersion program.
- Longitudinal research is suggested to determine the percentage of immersion students who are accepted, maintain enrollment, and graduate college.
- A study of immersion school completers and their postsecondary occupational opportunities is recommended.
- A comparison study is recommended to determine if language immersion achievement outcomes differ between programs offered in a rural and urban school district.
- Finally, parents studied were vested in their children's education and maintained communication, involvement, and relationships with the school and community. Not all will continue with the program. An area for study can be why families decided to discontinue their children's enrollment in a language immersion program.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations for this study were restricted to one specific school setting. There were also a number of participants who confirmed attendance to interview sessions however did not attend. The times for which parent interview sessions were scheduled limited parent attendance, and interview sessions were scheduled during the evening time on weekdays and mid-mornings on weekends. This study was also limited to parents

who possess a personal efficacy for supporting their children's overall development.

Parents of students who hold low levels of self-efficacy toward supporting their academic development did not contribute to this study.

Parents of students enrolled at CAF Elementary School were interviewed in order to study the motivations for enrolling their child in a dual language immersion language program. The only school involved in the study was CAF Elementary, which is a Title I school currently serving in its fifth year of successful Spanish immersion program implementation. This school is the first Spanish language immersion program established in its school district and has an enrollment totaling 407 kindergarten through fifth-grade students. CAF Elementary also provides parents the choice of enrolling their children in the traditional academic program. This program facilitates instruction solely in the English language.

The Spanish immersion program at CAF Elementary School seemed to be very successful with hiring highly qualified teachers, perpetuating a nurturing environment, and promoting collegial efficacy and parent involvement initiatives. This school also employs a diverse staff and serves a diverse student population with varied social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.

## **Conclusion**

Findings from this study aligned with research provided in Chapter 2. Parents choose dual language immersion programs because they want their children to have an advantage academically, socially and culturally. They believe it will lend to success with postsecondary academic and occupational opportunities. This study added to the existing body of language immersion research by illustrating participants' views, expectations,

and beliefs about the Spanish immersion program. All stakeholders are pivotal to the successful establishment and long-term functioning of dual language immersion programs. Schools cannot thrive without the collaboration, support, and involvement of parents.

Parents agreed they want to make sure their children's learning is not fractured as they advance to middle school. Parents "would like to see the immersion program expand to secondary settings" (P8 & P4) as they want their children to continue building on bilingual skills learned at the elementary school level. According to Wolfe (2003), the backbone of many successful programs has been due to the advocacy of parents. It is important for school districts to reach to out to the community and gather input toward future plans of extending the language immersion program to the middle and high school feeder patterns.

Parents are very happy with the language immersion staff at CAF Elementary School. They are pleased with the "family oriented" and "challenging" (P9) environment offered for their children. Parents interviewed are actively involved with their children's education in ways of parent teacher organization membership, parent volunteer opportunities, and special program support. Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) affirmed parents who are involved in their child's education lend to the improvement of students' overall learning and development. Parents' attitudes toward the CAF Elementary School immersion program were positive and supportive. Each parent interviewed was happy with the positive impact the language immersion program has made on their children "academically, culturally, and socially" (P1 & P18).

Parents serve as catalysts for implementing and sustaining dual language

immersion programs (Flores & Soto, 2012). Parents play a critical role with the success of schools across the United States. They hold school districts accountable for embedding innovative curriculum into programs that are conducive to providing students an advantage to compete for global opportunities after high school graduation (Flores & Soto, 2012). Parents hold CAF accountable for hiring highly qualified teachers who are able to effectively teach state aligned curriculum that is immersed with the Spanish language.

Parents collectively commented on how “the staff seems to genuinely care more about educating students” (P3). Parents agreed since enrolling their children in the immersion program, they have developed an “excitement for learning” (P1) and are enjoying their experience at CAF while being challenged in innovative ways. The approach to “discipline is positive which helps kids appropriately behave, interact with others, and thrive” (P3). Parents agreed that CAF is a place that teaches students to “celebrate each other” (P1, P3, P7, P12, & P15). P3 stated,

Students are encouraged to do the best that they can do for what they come to the table with. It’s a good school and I can’t believe it’s a public school. I see all the kids at the school being treated with respect every time I visit.

These parents are proud to have their children attend the Spanish immersion program at CAF Elementary School. They share a “love” (P1, P2, P3, P5, P9, P12, P15, P18, & P19) for this school and agreed that CAF Elementary is “an amazing place for children to learn.”



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## Appendix A

### Demographic Questionnaire: Parents

*Please take a moment to answer the following questions. Feel free to skip any question you prefer not to answer. **This questionnaire should be returned in the enclosed envelope.***

<p>1. Name: _____</p> <p>2. ____ My child attends the Spanish immersion program and is in grade _____          _____ My children attend the Spanish immersion program and are in grades _____</p> <p>3. ____ My child attends the Chinese, French, German or Japanese immersion program and is in grade _____ (circle one)          My children attend the Chinese, French, German or Japanese immersion program and is in grades _____ (circle one)</p> <p>3. How many researchers reached out to you to arrange for an interview?</p> <p>____ by e-mail (e-mail address: _____)</p> <p>____ by phone (phone number: _____ / best time to call: _____)</p>
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4. What is your ethnic background?

- \_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino
- \_\_\_\_ Caucasian/Anglo
- \_\_\_\_ African-American
- \_\_\_\_ Asian-American
- \_\_\_\_ American Indian/Alaskan Native

5. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- \_\_\_\_ Junior High/Middle School or below
- \_\_\_\_ High School or equivalent
- \_\_\_\_ Community College/Vocational School
- \_\_\_\_ 4-year College/University Degree
- \_\_\_\_ Professional Degree/Graduate School

7. What is your native language?

8. What language is most often used in your home?
9. Have you studied / do you speak a foreign language?
10. Have you lived / studied / worked abroad? If so, where?

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions: Parents

1. What made you decide to enroll your child in this program?
2. What was your own school experience like?
3. Do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?
4. What are your expectations of the school and the program?
5. What educational goals do you have for your child?
6. Where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?
7. Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?
8. What contacts/experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?
9. What were your feelings towards the Spanish language?
10. Please use three words to describe your child's school experience.
11. What would you tell interested parents about this school?

## Appendix C

### Parent Interview Transcripts

Transcription details:

Date: 16-Dec-2018  
 Input sound file: DLI SESSION

Transcription results:

dual language immersion session, number one, November 30th,.

So what made you decide to enroll your child into this program?

We thought to giving him the gift of another language would be a really good thing to do considering it costs a lot of money to learn a language. So we thought, "We would like to give him that gift." And we feel like Spanish was a good choice because there's so many Spanish speakers just in North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida. So we thought this would be something he would be able to use one day later in life.

Okay. So what was your own school experience like?

Well, I spent probably, I guess, maybe K through third in public school. And then fourth grade on, I went to smaller private Christian schools. And then I went to just a regular university for college, so.

Okay. So do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

I don't think so because I didn't really have anything like this when I was growing up. I remember learning Spanish or being able to select foreign languages, but I thought it was-- I feel like, in America, we're kind of spoiled with only needing to know one language. So I thought this would be a good opportunity for him to learn about other cultures, about other languages. So I don't think that that necessarily affected my decision. If it was available then, I probably would have been interested in doing it for myself. But yeah.

Okay. So what are your expectations of the school and the program?

Well, I was hoping, by the time he is finished at least in fifth grade, that he'll be fluent enough to be able to carry on a conversation, or be able to just have a conversation, or be able to understand the Spanish language.

Okay. So where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills in your opinion?

What are my responsibilities? How do you mean?

Who do you think is responsible for teaching your child social skills?

Oh, social skills. I believe that starts at the home, in the home life, and that's just



kind of-- I think it's really the home life that I would say, yeah.

Okay. And so what educational goals do you have for your child?

I would like him to finish up the Splash program. We're even thinking-- I think they've extended it now to middle school, which is something that is new too, so looking into doing that as well. So that may really solidify the language to make sure you-don't-use-it-you-lose-it type things. We want to do that. We want to try to continue through middle school. And then after that, it's really up to him if he wanted to go and further the education with college. He says he wants to be a lot of things, so we'll see [laughter].

Yeah. So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

I felt like this is the most usable language in our area, I would say. So I felt like something that he could continue with, and grow, and learn from outside, not just within the school.

Okay. So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

Well, we did do a bilingual preschool for him as well, which is kind of where I found out about all this and kind of I was like, "Oh, this is a new idea." So his teacher there was actually sending her child to do the program as well. And I was like, "Well, I'd like to check that out and see," because I was kind of not sure if that would make him fall behind in his studies in English. And when I went and sat in on the meeting, and they explained to us that children that are younger that learn dual languages, they score higher. They do better in all areas in English and in Spanish. So I thought, "Well, that's--" they showed us a graph and all statistics, and I was like, "Well, that would be good." So we just decided after the preschool to keep continuing on with it.

Awesome.

Yeah.

So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

I think it's awesome. I would like to learn. I'm kind of learning with him as he goes since he's starting at such a basic level. I had some in high school. I had some in college. So I probably can understand more than I can actually speak. But I feel like I really love it, and I think that he's taught us so much. And the way he speaks, it almost sounds like-- you wouldn't even know like he wasn't a-- like he was a native of a Spanish-speaking country because his accent is spot-on. It's really amazing. So I mean I just think that that's really cool and that he has that and he's teaching us as well.

Awesome. So please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

I think he is excited to learn. I think that he is motivated. And I think that he just generally has fun. He enjoys it.

Okay. Okay. And lastly, what would you tell interested parents about this school?

I would tell them that if they're not sure, to go ahead and do it because I felt like worst case scenario, if we didn't like the program, we could just leave. No harm done. But then if we didn't do it, then I would think, "Well, what if?" So if they're kind of on the fence and they're not really sure, that they should go to a meeting and see for themselves because I've been very impressed with everything here. The teachers are awesome. I like that they're from all different countries. They're always native speakers from Colombia or wherever they're from. And they add their own little dynamic to everything here whether it's their culture, their-- the way they even pronounce is different from Spanish-speaking countries. Some just pronounce things differently. So I would say just give it a go. You can't really lose. We've been very pleased, and he loves it, and he's done very well.

Good. It's good. All right. This concludes interview one, November 30th, at the CAF site

Transcription details:

Date: 16-Dec-2018  
 Input sound file: DLI SESSION

Transcription results:

DLI interview at CAF. Okay. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

My native language is Spanish. And since her family is English speaking, I thought that it would be really good for her to actually practice the language, not only at my house while I got school since-- when she goes to her dad, she doesn't, because they don't speak Spanish.

Okay. What was your own school experience like?

I went to school in Puerto Rico so it was very different. I mean, I don't know. It's very different here. You don't have to buy books and stuff for the kids. In Puerto Rico, you buy your own books every year and it's more structured and they wear uniforms. And here's kind of like more free-- free [inaudible] education. I don't know [laughter].

Okay. So do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

Not really. The language part, probably, but yeah.

Okay. So what are your expectations of the school in the program?

Just that she speaks-- she only speaks Spanish on her Spanish days. I'm very strict that she speaks Spanish on her Spanish days, so that she has to practice. Probably, as long as their doing that, I don't-- I'm not very helicopter parent [laughter].

Okay. So what educational goals do you have for your child?

Hopefully, she'll go to college. But I also think that trade schools and trades are a lot of things that are missing right now. So whatever she wants to do. I just want her to know more than one language just because that has opened a lot of doors for me so I wanted her to have the same opportunities that I've had.

Okay. So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

[inaudible] that's my native language [laughter].

Where do you think the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

The parent and school

So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

Well, I'm from Puerto Rico so my native language is Spanish. And we don't visit often because it's very expensive. But when we do visit, she's very comfortable with the language.

Okay. So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

I love it [laughter]. And I mean, if you look at the-- if you look at the statistics, like 40% of The United States is now Spanish speaking so it comes in handy. And every job that I've held in-- since I've come to The United States, I've had-- my degree is not in any of the jobs that I've had, and they've hired me just because I speak Spanish. They told me at an interview to there like, "We just need somebody that speaks Spanish."

Okay. So please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Amazing. Peaceful. I mean, this school is just-- [Mr.] is just amazing, everybody. I mean, even not the Spanish teachers, this school is just like a-- of course, there's 800 people here so I don't know everybody but it's like a family. They really care about the kids and I just love this school. I don't know about other [inaudible] schools. I just love Furr [laughter].

So what would you tell interested parents about this school?

That this is the greatest school that their kid will ever go to. Actually, my friend just moved to Furr territory just to go to Furr because I convinced her to. This is amazing. I mean, the kids are exposed to so much diversity. I know that I've had friends with-- my child is biracial. I have friends with biracial children who have had horrible experiences in schools where there's no diversity. My child doesn't know horrible experiences because of the way she looks. With the exception of sometimes they talk about her hair and stuff like that but that's just girls. But I want to keep her innocent towards all that the longest possible that I can. I mean this is just-- this is an amazing school. I mean, I just love it.

Okay. All right this concludes the site interview. Dual language immersion study, session two at the site. Okay. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

We were moving here from Massachusetts and we wanted to keep our son back for social and emotional reasons. But he was way ahead academically so we knew we had to find something and this seemed like an amazing fit where he could be challenged and academically but also catch socially. Because he's an end of August birthday so he's very young for his grade. And tiny.

What was your own school experience like?

I went to a very small school. K through eight, [saying?] 25-ish kids Kindergarten through eighth grade. So. All white. Yeah. Middle of nowhere.

Did you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your

child to this school?

Yes, but not in regards to the Spanish language program. Just in regards to the fact that it feels like a very tight-knit community. And that's important to us.

So what are your expectations of the school and the program?

Just the hope that my son will learn conversational Spanish by the end of fifth grade. And feel confident enough to use it in his writing and speech.

Okay. So what are your educational goals-- what educational goals do you have for your child?

For this particular child they're pretty high because he achieves and he has an easy time memorizing and an easy time doing that so, My overall goals are that he has access to what he wants to do at the end of high school. That he has enough options so that whatever direction he wants to go in he's not held back by something.

Okay. So in your opinion where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

For the school?

Just overall.

Oh, it lies with us. And the school. I mean I really expect a school to hold up their end of the bargain and that's also why we chose this school. It just seems like everybody is genuinely caring, they're more about education than discipline. Like positive discipline as in learning as opposed to punishment. So that's a huge thing that I like about here. They're very good with socials stuff.

Okay. So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Our daughter Nina who's currently our youngest daughter is Hispanic but my husband and I are not. So we really focused on the Spanish to know that when she gets here, because she's four now, she'll be able to learn Spanish as well and connect with the Spanish community because we can't give her that at home in the same way. So.

So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

Well, our daughter being Hispanic. We've been to Spanish speaking countries before: Puerto Rico and Spain and other countries that speak Spanish. But nothing too specific. Mostly our daughter.

Okay. So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

I'm neutral. I think it's always great for people to know more than one language. And I think Spanish is probably one of the more often spoken second languages in the country so.

Okay. Please use three words to describe your child's school experience?

Positive, fun, beneficial.

And so what would you tell interested parents about this school?

You can't go wrong. I mean my daughter is not in the Spanish language program and her and her brother could not be more polar opposites in any way. She is older than he is. So she didn't do the program. But I wouldn't have had her do it because she struggles enough with spelling and those things in English that one language was good for her. And they're both socially different, academically different, everything. And they're both having an amazing time here. And they're both being nurtured the way they need to be nurtured and I think they're both genuinely being encouraged to do the best that they can do for what they come to the table with. Like I really do [inaudible] [school?]. It's a good school. And I can't believe it's a public school. It's so good. And I see all the kids at the school being treated with respect every time I'm in here. There's never any bad talk about the kids. It's a nice place. It's a really nice place.

I love that.

I get like that when I talk about [this?] school.

Wow, well thank you so much. [This ends?] session two at the [coral?] [inaudible]. Session three the [coral A for sight?]. All right, so what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

Specific to Splash was because we actually came from New Jersey. We lived in Jersey City. And our daughter was already a part of a similar program there. It was a little different that they did one week of English and one week of Spanish [and actually kind of a lot?] better results here. And actually, from what we see, it's actually being more successful here. We're seeing better growth here. But my wife's actually Puerto Rican and speak Spanish. But I think either way we would have probably liked to [have?] her in the program.

So what was your own school experience like?

Like personally?

Yes.

Very different than here. I often say I probably went to school here I've been a lot happier child. This is a great school. It's fine I mean I think challenges to typical grade school experience I actually grew up going to a lot of different schools. We moved around a lot. But I just think back to one-- I feel like they were more structured and specific at how they taught. There was less out of the box thinking. [Two?], it was less diversified. A lot of the towns I grew up in were typical all white [inaudible] [homes?] and I mean families and stuff and a lot of smalltown America. So just a lot different from cultural to size of schools, a lot of small towns. Especially when I was younger were mostly small towns. I did get one lucky experience for about six months to a year in Oregon where we had a lot more

diversity and it was really neat out there. It was very different than what I was used to but it was neat. [It was like?] big mix for growing up, moving around.

Okay, so do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

I won't say influenced our decision to bring her to this particular school. I will say it influenced my research and interest in where she would attend. So we looked at private schools, public schools what did they offer what did they not offer. Came to visit this school twice. Met with the principal couple of times. Walked the halls twice. You know what I mean? They had a lot of research because, one, schooling is so much different now. So much more options in where they can go on things. You don't just go, "I moved to this neighborhood [inaudible]." There's a lot more. And then, two, I think a lot being concerned with the types of parents and families that she would be around. Because often that makes as much or more different than anything else. Not only are they with those teachers eight hours a day they're with 20, 30 other students everyday. So where are those students coming from? What kind of families are they coming from? And that's really more about character than anything else.

So what are your expectations of the school and the program?

For the school I think it's, one, providing a safe and just healthy learning environment where they can grow both as people as well as intellectually but you know I mean academically. But also just in their characters thinking things like that safety sort of things like that. And then for the program, similar, but what I think I really enjoy about this program more than other things I've heard about is you always have to explain to people that they're not learning Spanish, they're learning in Spanish. And I think that's one of the things. And I think I mean one of my first [experiences?] is that they should really try to do what they can to carry it [more similarly?] on [which end?] that they're working on. But I think [just that?] when she comes out nearly fluent which she almost is. I'd say she's probably 75, 85% in fourth grade. And then I would say [again?] just allow her mind to work outside the box. I think so many times we teach there's only one way to do things and we're not all the same. We think differently otherwise we'd all have same careers. So I think just giving kids a chance to learn let their minds work in a way that helps them with where their brain works is good. And a lot of the teachers I know do that here so.

So what educational goals do you have for your child?

It's a good question. It's really just her hitting and maintaining school level standards. It's also looking at her where she's at, what certain subjects that she's strong in and making sure she's challenged with those subjects even like example, she's always had a really strong set in math but a weaker set in English, yet she loves to write. So finding teachers who can help her still enjoy her writing capabilities even if she's not as strong in say a comprehension or a grammar whatever the case might be. That's important because it [inaudible] to pursue her creative side and her academic strengths because those may not always fall on the

same space. And I think that's a big thing is allowing her to continue to do that because they'll both probably come together somewhere down the road or she pursues [them properly?] And of course eventually with the [collegic?] level or whatever the case is, yeah.

So where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills in your opinion?

I think it's the responsibility of the home and school

Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Spanish is the number one language spoken in the united states.

What contacts/experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

Environmental. Public locations and work

What are your feelings toward the Spanish Language?

I think it's great to be able to communicate with others in a different language. Being this language is the most spoken other than English in this area, I feel it's important to be able to communicate.

Please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Fun, exciting, innovative.

What would you tell interested parents about this school?

I would tell them they would be very pleased with the growth they will see in their child while attending a program like this. Programs like this will benefit children tremendously with their development and learning. I have first hand experience with my own child.



Transcription details:

Date: 16-Dec-2018  
 Input sound file: DLI SESSION

Transcription results:

language immersion research session, December 6 at CAF. Okay.

So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

I felt it will increase his opportunity in the job market when he gets older.

What was your own school experience like?

With different languages or just in general?

Just in general.

I went to public school, I went to a good public school. I ended up going to college. So I think my experience has been pretty good, as far as education goes.

Do you think your own school experience has influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

Most definitely. I have a diverse background, so it contributed to it. So yeah.

What are your expectations of the school and the program?

I'd say it's expecting to teach them the best way possible. I know that every student is different. So generally, I'd just expect out of a school, to figure out what works best for each child and use those techniques. That's all.

What educational goals do you have for your child?

Well, I most definitely want all of my children to go to college, and get a college degree. So I want them to have as high a level of education as possible.

Where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

Where?

Yes, where do you think the responsibility lies?

I think half of it is at home and half of it is in their environment, which is at school most of the time.

Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

I have been around Spanish speakers more frequently than any other language, so I hear it more often than I do any other language.

Okay. What contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and

culture prior to enrolling your child in this program

Not much.

What are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

I love it. Like I said I have a diverse background and I have been exposed to a lot more. So, I most definitely want my children to incorporate that in their learning experience.

Please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Exciting. Shish, besides exciting. Aside from education [inaudible] socially he has been [inaudible], I don't know, I can't get one word. I think he has advanced socially and he has learned far more than he did at his previous school so.

So what would you tell interested parents about this school?

I would most definitely tell them that the staff is extremely friendly, caring and they are very attentive to each student. It's not just a process, it feels like they are genuinely concerned about the kid's education and their wellbeing so.

Thank you so much. This concludes session 1 on December 6

Session 2, December 6, school site. Dual language emersion. Studying. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

I wanted my child to be bilingual so he can have a bigger -- or more possibilities whenever he grows up, so he can be more available. I have three kids from my first marriage and they don't speak Spanish. So I can see -- they say, "Mom, why didn't we speak -- why didn't we learn?" But my husband is Caucasian -- my first husband was Caucasian -- so my mother-in-law babysat for them, so all they heard when they were small was English. And now I'm embarrassed because they have a lot of Hispanic friends and they don't understand and they look Latino. They look like me. And they ask them, actually my seventeen year old daughter, actually, "Don't you learn -- don't you know English? Your mom is Mexican." But it's my fault because I never taught them. So I didn't want my youngest ones to go through that. And then another thing that I know that by being bilingual they make more money. They're more marketable, so they'll be able to make more money, if they have a different -- another trade. So that was the biggest reason.

Okay. So what was your own school experience like?

Well I grew up most of my life I was -- I live in Mexico, so when I went to school all I learn was Spanish. Until I came here and went to -- I took college and it was a little bit hard because my English wasn't that good. So I had to learn a different language when I got here, but it was good because, thank god, now I have a good job because I have -- I'm bilingual. So I had a good experience.

Okay. Do you think you're own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

Yes. Definitely.

Okay. What are your expectations of this school and the program?

Well I hope that my kids are fluent. Can be fluent in both English and Spanish. And I believe that it's both of my responsibilities -- my responsibility as well to be able to teach them. And so encouraging to keep learning both languages.

Okay. What educational goals do you have for your child?

I'm hoping he goes to mas-- I mean grad school, if possible.

Okay. Where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

Well, just like I said it, [inaudible] or the school has the responsibility, but I will think the major responsibility falls on the parents. It starts in our homes and then it follows to schools.

Okay. Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish, instead of another language?

Well because I want my kids to learn Spanish and since that's my main -- mom's background, that's Spanish and theirs too. So my husband prohibits for us to speak English at home. My kids actually prefer to speak English at home, but my husband says, "No. We're not speaking English at home. We have to speak Spanish." So yea. They have to learn to read it and write it.

Okay. So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program? and we I mean he was like if he was trying old learning and basically what we took at home but now there [was?] [inaudible] at that no other experiences.

Okay. What are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

I love it [laughter]. Its pretty, it's [premium?] language to speak.

So please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Was very encouraging, it's a wonderful program and we love it.

Lastly, what would you tell interested parents about this school?

I will tell them that is a very good school and they should enroll the kids here because speaking another different language it's a good [trait?] for kids to have.

This concludes session three on December six at [Carly?] for elementary school. Do language immersions research Carly for elementary school. Next session, what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

Because it is a Spanish program.

What was your own school experience like?

Amazing [laughter].

Do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

Yes.

Okay. What are your expectations of this school?

Well that my kids learn more Spanish because they just want to speak English at home so yeah.

Okay. What educational goals do you have for your child?

A lot. [laughter]

Okay. Where does the responsibility lay in teaching your child social skills?

Everything I want them to learn everything about Spanish or [lay?] I want to take grow up in a really good way.

Okay, do you think the responsibility is to schools or yours?

Mine.

Yours. Okay. So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Like I said they just want to speaks English but I want them to speaks Spanish-- we live in a country where most people speak Spanish.

Okay, so what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

It is funny but like a lot of [experience?] because when they came here they didn't speak anything it was Spanish and then we came and they're speaking Spanish a lot at home so we're so excited with because we're practicing with them.

So what are your feelings towards the Spanish language?

I think is very important because most of my family speaks Spanish they don't speak English so that's [one?].

So please use three words to describe your child's school experience?

[Silent?], motivated and very interested.

So what would you tell interested parents about the school?

Just don't think about it just do it [laughter].

All right, thank you so much this concludes the dual language immersion research session on December sixth at [Carly?] for elementary school.

...that's it.

Dual language immersion study at [Carly?] for elementary school December six.

So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

It's just dual I guess I wanted them to learn two different languages because this and that what's better for her.

Okay. So what was your own school experience like?

Here [inaudible] was pretty good I guess.

Okay. So do you think your own school experience influence your decision to send your child to this school?

Oh yeah.

So what are your expectations of the school and the program?

But I guess get more kids involved [inaudible].

So what educational goals do you have for your child?

That would be a-- Charity speaks both the languages but I just want her to more of I guess most [inaudible] I'm assuming which doesn't have [inaudible] which kind of I try to teach them both, I guess. I couldn't tell you.

Okay. So where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills, in your opinion?

That's actually good.

Okay. So do you believe the responsibility lies with you or the school, to teach?

No it actually relies on me because everything just pretty much starts at home.

Okay. So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

It's just the way that I brought them up, I guess. That's why I wanted them to learn.

Okay. So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

[inaudible] wife really kind of takes care of all that. I really wouldn't know. She pretty much gets in touch with them on all that. A lot. Every day in my neighborhood.

Okay. So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

My--what are my [laughter] okay.

[laughter] So how do you feel about the Spanish language?

It's actually good. Especially somebody to actually learn and get to know, I guess.

Okay. So three words to describe your child's school experience.

She always likes learning. She likes to be with the people that she works with. And it's just something new for her to get to know, I guess.

So what would you tell interested parents about this school?

They should enroll them in a different word to get to learn something new, I guess.

Okay. This concludes the next session of dual-language immersion research at [Carl Eifer?] Elementary School.

Dual-language immersion research at [Carl Eifer?] Elementary School.

[foreign]

This ends the dual-language immersion data-collection session at [Carl Eifer?] Elementary School.

Next Session, So What made you enroll your child in a Dual Language Immersion Program?

This is my neighborhood school. We like the school and would have sent our child to this school if it wasn't our neighborhood school because of the program.

What was your own school experience like?

It was good. I had fun but wasn't a student that got good grades.

Do you think your own school experience influenced you to send your child to this school?

Yes, definitely. I want more for my children.

What are your expectations of the school and the program?

To teach my child how to speak English and get better speaking Spanish. My child did not grow up in the same area that I did.

What educational goals do you have for your child?

To be successful and go to college.

Where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

With me.

Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

This is my native language. I want to make sure that he continues to speak the Spanish language.

What contacts/experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

My family and friends. This is my native language

What were your feelings towards the Spanish language?

Good. It's the language that I speak.

Please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Good program, Nice, Fun.

What would you tell interested parents about this school?

This is a good program that will help your child move further than other children in the future.

Okay so Next Session, So What made you enroll your child in a Dual Language Immersion Program?

This is my neighborhood school. We were lucky.

What was your own school experience like?

It was okay.

Do you think your own school experience influenced you to send your child to this school?

This is my neighborhood school. But I would have sent my child to this school regardless because of all this program has to offer for my child.

What are your expectations of the school and the program?

For them to teach my child. For my child to get a good education.

What educational goals do you have for your child?

For them to go to college and be successful.

Where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

With me and the school.

Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

This is my native language and is most spoken the US.

What contacts/experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

I was born and raised Spanish. this is my Culture

What were your feelings towards the Spanish language?

Good. I speak the language.

Please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Great, Fun, Beneficial

What would you tell interested parents about this school?

This program will help your child do better in their studies and will help their future



Transcription details:

Date: 16-Dec-2018  
 Input sound file: DLI SESSION

Transcription results:

Dual Language Immersion interview session four. November 3rd. Okay. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

I wanted to have something that was going to challenge my kid educationally. And my husband and I just felt that the learning another language, especially Spanish, would help them in the long run outside of just basic education. Just life skills in general.

So what was your own school experience like?

It was good. I feel like it was just regular, average as far as learning. Don't feel like anyone was there to push me or anything, and so we tried to do a little bit more. Go above and beyond for our children.

Do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

I would say I guess not so much the school experience, but just life experience. Learning after school what really the meat of life is about. It's more than just what you learn inside of that building. And so, like I said, just sending them to a school that is challenging overall outside of education and giving them something that they can take with life wherever they go and whatever they do.

So what are you expectations of the school and the program?

Of the school it's just to continue to feed these kids something they can really grasp. Giving them that cultural diversity that I feel like a lot of people don't get. And as far as the program, just equipping them and giving them real life skills that they can use. Continue to just help them with the language, learning the language, and really be able to connect with people outside of their cultural diversity.

So what educational goals do you have for your child?

We push our kids to excel. To not just learn what is given to them for that specific grade level. But we really try to push them and maybe go to the next grade level. For instance, my child, he is in 2nd grade. Right now he is reading at the goal expectations for the end of the year. And so, we really push them, and we pride ourselves on that. Just being average is not good enough. So we really try to encourage our kids and nourish them [inaudible].

So where does the responsibility lie in teaching your kid social skills?

Absolutely at home. Absolutely. I feel like in the classroom it should be

secondhand. We don't put the pressure on the teachers because there's 20-something kids that the teachers are trying to handle each day, and so we really put the responsibility on ourselves as parents and be firsthand for our kids.

Why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Number one, I feel like Spanish is astronomically needed in these days and times. And number two, we are connected with a lot of Spanish people in Spanish church, so we wanted-- and so we thought it was best for our kids to learn Spanish.

Which leads us to the next question. What contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language, which is Spanish, in culture prior to enrolling your child in this program.

Again, we have several friend relationships with people that speak Spanish. And then we previously were going to a Spanish church, and that really helped encourage our decision.

Okay. So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

It's something that's absolutely needed, especially for English-speaking people. So we can not only communicate with people in this country, but we can go abroad. We can really push ourselves and meet other people's needs outside of just the English language.

Please use three words to describe your child's school experience or your children's school experience.

Outstanding. Boundary-pushing. I guess that would be a phrase [laughter]. And higher. Higher.

So what would you tell interested parents about this school?

This school as a whole is I feel like very family-oriented. I feel like the school as a whole really pushes the kids. And I can only speak about the Spanish Immersion Program, and it's a great program. Been there for three years, and there are no complaints about it.

Okay. This concludes the interview session for DLI session number four.

Transcription details:

Date: 16-Dec-2018  
 Input sound file: DLI SESSION

Transcription results:

Dual language immersion session, November 10. Okay. We're going to go ahead and get started. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program, into the DLI program.

Well, I had heard about it from a friend whose child was in the program and she had a lot of good things to say about it. I went to some of the meetings that the principal had and read the information they gave us and I just-- my father was a language teacher, not Spanish but-- and so I just had an appreciation for how learning a foreign language really helps a child in all aspects of education actually, not just the language itself. And I also knew, and this is probably from my father, that-- he's no longer here so he doesn't know anything about it but, I also knew that the younger a child starts learning a language the more easily they acquire it. And so I didn't start a foreign language until I was in middle school so I thought "Well this is great. They can start learning and have the experience of having the teachers speaking to them in Spanish all day long." And the other factor for me was, my son actually has Hispanic background, he is adopted and his biological father is from South America and so he is in-party Hispanic and so-- and he does have contact with his biological parents so I thought this would really be a great way to help him have that part of culture and his heritage that I don't have. You know, being a Caucasian. So those were my reasons, my husband kind of added one before I came down here. He looked at it as just the advantage in community relations and job opportunities and things like that that he would have knowing a second language.

Okay. Thank you. So what was your own school experience like?

I went to school in a suburban school district right outside of Pittsburgh and it was a good school district, as far as-- I told you my own foreign language, I took German because that was what my dad taught but I didn't start until middle school, so I took German through middle school and high school and a little bit of college. So I think my school experience overall was good, was positive. I enjoyed school.

Okay. Do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

To this particular school?

Yes.

Not in particular. We live now in a different state, a different community than I grew up in. This is the school that is our neighborhood school, our geographic school so it wasn't that I was sending him outside-- you know if he wasn't in the

Spanish immersion program and he was just going to the school that was in his geographic area, this would be the school. So yeah. So we did look at other schools but we really liked the Spanish immersion program and we're happy that it was available in this school in our district, so that's pretty much what we did.

Okay. So what are your expectations of the school and the program?

Wow. That's kind of broad. You know, obviously, I want the school to provide my child a good education. I planned to be involved with that, it's not just the school's responsibility obviously to educate my child, but I expect them to have high standards for his achievement, right. I can see already he's very excited about learning to read. And, so yeah, he's excited when he recognizes his words, and I'm happy to see his enthusiasm for that because boys aren't always interested in reading [laughter]. So I guess with the program in particular from what I have heard from other parents whose children are further along in school, is the kids do need to start really becoming [inaudible]. I think that would be awesome for him. I do I guess-- if you look just online and look at the school's ratings and that kind of thing, I'm a little disappointed to see some of their ratings. And I'm surprised because that's not what I hear from parents in the community. I hear very good things about the school and the teachers. But the ratings are like a C rating. How does that happen? And how is that acceptable in the school? And the percentages of kids who are performing at grade-level in reading and math, are to me, they're well. But as far as [inaudible] he's in kindergarten, so we're just a couple of months into the school year [laughter]. So as far as what I see of what he's doing right now and what his teachers are doing with him, I'm satisfied with what he's doing.

Awesome. So what educational goals do you have for your child?

I'm not real specific. I mean, I want him to obviously pursue whatever he's interested in doing in life. I'm a little bit concerned about how quickly the school [inaudible]. How quickly we try to get kids to specialize. We have the STEM program now. We have the [inaudible] program, and these are all awesome programs. But I'm just like, when they're so young, I just and of course, [inaudible] [laughter]. But what I liked about the Spanish [inaudible] program was, it's not just focusing on learning foreign languages. They're learning all those subjects in Spanish one day and then English the next day. So it's not just we're going to make you guys [inaudible]. They're just learning the language as they're learning their other subjects. So I want him to have a broad education, a broad [general education?]. And when he's in the workforce, he's going to have to choose a career path. He's going to have to choose what he wants to focus on. But in the beginning, I just want him to learn to enjoy learning, and [inaudible] his curiosity about the world and different things. So, yeah. I'm not too interested in getting him [inaudible] going to make robots [laughter]. Yeah, whatever. Not at this age. He'd probably love that [inaudible] [laughter]. But, yeah. I just want to engage him with education where he'll have a foundation for whatever he wants to go into later. And that's why I'm excited about his excitement about learning to read and learning words because that's going to help him in any avenue he chooses to follow as a

career.

So where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

Primarily with the parents, I would say. Certainly, the schools has a role to play in that, and he's an only child. So I think the school environment is really good for him, as far as, learning how to relate to other people and learning [inaudible] not to go first in line all the time [laughter]. He loves to be. And so he did go to daycare before elementary school and that was one of the reasons. And the obvious one whose parents work, but that was one of the reasons we thought it was good for him to be in that daycare setting is that just the basics of take your turn. Be considerate of others, that kind of thing. Not everybody is the same as you or thinks the same or lives the same as you do, and just learning to relate to people-- so again, the primary responsibility is with us, the parent, but certainly, after, the teachers, and they already have been working on that. We've done a few little behavior marks of [laughter] not playing kindly with friends [laughter] and things like that, so he is learning that it's not all about him.

Okay, so why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Again, that was our neighborhood school, but even if it hadn't been available at our neighborhood school, I probably would've considered a number of school that would teach Spanish, partly because Spanish is the most common second language here, other than English, in the community, and so I think that would be most practical for him, and also the second thing would be he does have Hispanic background, himself, so that would be part of his culture and heritage that we wanted him to have.

So what context or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

If I include my husband in that he is part of a church group that goes to Columbia, South America. Every summer, he's been there for the last six or seven summers before my son was even born, and he's been involved in a program down there with children down there in Columbia, so that he has more exposure to Spanish language and culture than I do. For me, just of people in the community that I've met. I work in healthcare, so I deal with a lot of people who are Spanish-speaking, and many times, I wished I knew more Spanish than I do [laughter]. I'm learning a little bit along with my son. Of course, he's learning much faster than I am [laughter], but that's mainly my experience. Oh, this is a number of years back, but when we lived in the Midwest, we had a graduate student that lived with us for a while, and he was from Mexico, so he lived with us for about a year and a half, so learned some about his culture and language that way.

So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language [laughter]?

Just listening to it, I think it's a very lyrical language. We're listening to it, but I sort of wish I understood it better [laughter]. I'm not sure if my feelings' positive, negative, anything, just, it's--

Positive or negative?

I don't have any negative feelings about it. It's obviously a language used in many countries and cultures worldwide, so again, another reason why I think it would be a great thing for my son to be fluent eventually in that, and so I guess that's about it. I don't have a specific feeling. You mean when I hear someone speaking Spanish, do I have a feeling about it?

Yes, just your overall feeling about--

Really, I mean, I wish I understood better, but I wish I could converse more in it myself, so yeah.

Okay. Please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Okay [laughter].

Three words.

I'm a wordy person, so three is [laughter]-- it's hard. I think challenging, just because he's in kindergarten. Everything is new, so it's challenging, exciting. He's very enthusiastic of it, and new. It's a new experience for him. It's a new experience for us. We've never had a child in elementary school. My last experience with kindergarten was when I was in kindergarten, which was a really long time ago [laughter].

And last question, what would you tell interested parents about this school?

Just the school in general?

Yes.

Not the Spanish program? I think it's a really good school as far as what I have seen so far, just in the few months my son's been there. I could see that the principal and the teachers are very invested in the kids' experience. I know some of the events we've gone to that there are a lot of teachers and staff come, and stay late, and just seem to really-- it's a big school, and for an elementary school, it's kind of big. It's over 700 kids, but it seems that the teachers and the staff are-- they really try to get to know the kids' names and just-- I mean, I think it's a good community school, and so [inaudible] I would tell them. I mean, I would recommend [inaudible] interested.

Well, thank you so much.

You're welcome.

This concludes the first interview on November 10

Transcription details:

Date: 16-Dec-2018  
 Input sound file: DLI Session

Transcription results:

start recording. Session two of dealing with immersion research. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

I think now because of the change in environment we have in our country that Spanish is becoming more prominent and wildly accepted now. So I wanted my child to get a good start and being in that age, she's able to soak in as much knowledge as she can that I thought would be a good opportunity for her to learn both languages at the same time.

So what was your own school experience like?

Okay. As far [inaudible] I have been exposed to different types and languages and perhaps even studying along the way. Those were offered to me but more in high school and in college and I didn't take it as seriously as I should have to look back but because of that experience as well as where we are now in society. That should take more attention.

Okay. So do you think your own school has experienced influence your decision to send your child to this school?

Certainly yes.

So what are your expectations of the school and of this splash program?

Well, my expectations of the school to continue to measure if this is successful and if so, my expectation as a whole would be that each school adopts this because like I said, it wasn't offered to me but I just believed that it has so many benefits being able to just culturally diverse and accepting that that's [inaudible] to me right now.

So what educational goals do you have for your child?

Well, of course I would like for her to have an [inaudible] education at least complete undergrad school, definitely walk away with a four-year degree. Anything beyond that, I want to be more of a support role for her [inaudible] not have that type of pressure or what she wants to do but certainly have a direct pressure to [inaudible].

So where does the responsibility lie in teaching you child social skills?

Well, the responsibility lies-- it always lies at home to me. It's being able to interact with here on many different levels as a parent but more importantly to be able to do things together outside of the home whether that's [inaudible] more educational type of institute if that's museums or if that's any type of monuments,

anything to be able to expose here to history but also others that are also being exposed to have those conversations and just been those social environments.

So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead on another language?

Because I believe that Spanish is one of those languages that is prevalent and that's [inaudible] to our child as a family although we're working with all languages, I think Spanish is certainly one of the predominant languages in today's society.

Okay. So what context or experiences have you had with the partner language which is Spanish and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program.

Other than my professional exposure, I interact with people every day. And many times I'm in Hispanic and Latino communities. And I feel as though because I am unable to connect with them that for me it's a disconnect. And that's something that I even look back and wish that I had paid attention in school. But now that my daughter is in this program, it's pushing me to learn the language as well.

So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

I would say as far as my feelings towards it, to be perfectly honest I don't have a feeling. I just know that it's a part of our world. It's a part of our makeup. So again being that it is one of the prominent languages next to english, certainly in my experience of life, that I think that it's one of those things where if I don't want to take that interest and learn it voluntarily, then it's going to be something in the future where I'll probably not have that type of option. That it becomes a necessity to learn it.

So please use 3 words to describe your child's school experience.

New, fun and big.

So what would you tell interested parents about this school?

About this school in particular I would say that they're certainly trying to be the trendsetters. And you always want to take interest in some system, some program that's trying to do something different. Because different sometimes is a good thing. And you will never know unless you try it.

Okay. So this concludes our interview. Session 1, October 13th. Session 2 of [DLI?] research study, October 13th. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

There a few reasons actually. Number 1 of course is the proximity to our house. The convenience of it. But the other thing is that my wife and I both lived in California and we saw this program work in high school level. My wife did a counseling internship at a high school in California where this program is being done with high schoolers. And we had always be enamored by it. And when the opportunity came for our own local neighborhood school to do it, we jumped at the chance.



So what was your own school experience like?

I had a great school experience. I think my wife and my experience were quite different and contrasting. I came from a very small town in Michigan. She came from a very suburban area of suburban Chicago. And so there weren't a lot of other languages spoken where I was from. But she had a little bit of a taste of that where she grew up.

So do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

I don't. But the short answer is no. But the long answer is my experience after school is what really promoted that. I did a lot of traveling overseas. I worked overseas after I finished college so those experiences were what really shaped part of my idea that helped push this program.

Awesome. So what are your expectations of the school and the program?

Because I'm a teacher in Cabarrus County and so is my wife where my wife is the guidance counselor in the county, I think we kind of understand what the protocol is for education, what to expect from Cabarrus County schools; but for this particular school, in general, is I really want both of our children to be able to come out and be able to speak and converse in Spanish when they go to their job. And, really, we think about it as an advantage to a job but also to social aspects of whether they meet friends or what have you.

Awesome. So what educational goals do you have for your child?

Through elementary school is I want them to be able to have dialogue. I want them to be confident in not only their English language but also the Spanish language that they're learning now. By the time they get to high school, I want them to be able to sit down with an interviewer. I want them to be able to sit down at a job interview and have the job interview or walk away from them and say this person could use both languages to help our business.

So where, in your opinion, does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

That's a great question. It starts at the home but I also think that we as educators, myself as an educator, we need to help guide our students into what is right and wrong and, especially, for working with their 21st Century skills, and we know that that's one of the goals for Cabarrus County is that one of the 21st Century skills is being able to social and being able to speak with someone and be able to look them in the eyes and express your opinion and politely disagree with them and what have you. So, it's both.

So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

There weren't a ton of opportunities elsewhere and really, it just fell into our lap. Now, I teach at a STEM school and so one of the choices was for me to take our kids to my school rather than have them stay at their neighborhood school. We just

thought that because Spanish is so widely spoken, number one, and I suppose it's also because although I don't speak Spanish, my wife doesn't speak Spanish and none of our traveling that we've done has been to Spanish-speaking countries, we do have a little bit of a background in Spanish to be able to maybe get by a little bit. And so, I think that was why we originally or ultimately ended up with a Spanish-speaking school.

So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

There's been quite a few, I suppose. I suppose number one is travel abroad. My wife and I have both taken multiple Spanish-speaking classes. I'm an ELL instructor and so, therefore, most of my days is spent with Spanish speakers. And I think it's also just-- my wife and I like to embrace other cultures. We like to learn about other people. We don't like a boring, vanilla idea of one type of person to hang out with. We like the diverse crowd so all of that kind of encompasses why we want our-- because our students are getting a ton of culture in addition to-- they're learning about Chile, they're learning about Colombia like they're learning where their teachers are from and we think it's fantastic.

Awesome. So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

As much as they can. I mean the more, the better. Just like I teach my own students, I'd say you are empowered by having more than one language I am trying to preach that to my own kids now until they understand this language is power.

So please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Let's start with my older son. He is competitive, I suppose [inaudible]. He is very sensitive in school, he's a sensitive kid. He is very intelligent. My daughter is much more happy-go-lucky. She is more sweet, and she is more of the, like a social butterfly.

So what would you tell interested parents about this school?

Number one for us, it's been a very positive experience. It's been fantastic. It's been what we've expected. It's been what we thought. The students are coming home, and my wife and I are having conversations about, this wasn't our expectation, this wasn't what I thought it was going to be, this is precisely what we thought it would be. Biggest question that we have moving forward now is not the program that my children are in K-5, it's what are they going to do afterward. That is the biggest question that my wife and I talk about is. My wish is that the middle school has not a Spanish class for my kids to take, but that the middle school has a History class, or a English class, or a Language Arts class. For my students, that is in the Spanish language, because I don't want them to lose this. And I feel like if they are placed in the regular Spanish one, that it would be-- it's they would be on that. They will be beyond that by that time. I want them to be able to take a class that is taught from a native Spanish speaker in Spanish with whatever [inaudible]. You can take a US history class that has been taught in Spanish. So they are going to lose that skill. Does that make sense?

Yes. It makes sense.

Well, thank you so much to [inaudible] our session.

Okay.

All right. We are going to go ahead and get started. Session 3, October 13, Dual-Language Immersion Study. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

Where we're living today, I mean a lot of people speak Spanish. It's like a second language here. So I wanted them to be able to know the language.

So what was your own school experience like?

School? College? High school?

Yeah. Just like middle school, elementary school, high school.

It was great. I lived in a very small city. It was a diverse high school, middle school. And when I went to grad, I went to [HBCU?]

So do you think your own school experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

No.

So what--

Like I said where I work in today, a lot of people speak Spanish, and in the language which [inaudible] like a second language here. So I want them to be able to have it. And then, when they get ready to graduate, go to college or whatever, it will be easier for them. And when they go into work, of course, if you have that language background, it's additional [funding?] for them. For money. Think about the money [aspect?].

So what are your expectations of the school and the program?

I expect my kids to know Spanish. When they become [inaudible] for fifth-grade, I want to [inaudible] further. And I have seen a lot of improvement in my daughter. I mean she speaks the language well. When she went to [inaudible] last September, and she was able to speak the language. My [inaudible] is Hispanic, and he don't speak English. So I ask [inaudible] what is he saying to me? And she is able to interpret whatever he says.

So what educational goals did you have for your child or children?

Education is very, very important for me and my husband, for our kids. If they want to go to college-- I want them to go to college. [inaudible] or something like that. I'm not going to force them to go to college if they do something that doesn't really require a college education or background. Others mean to start businesses, so if they want to go that route, they can. But I do feel like they should experience college. I think all kids, if it's for them, should experience college, at a HBCU

hopefully.

So where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

For me?

Mm-hmm. In your opinion.

With me and the school. I think they should--I put them in extra-curricular activities too, at a young age. My daughter started doing competition cheering too. We relocated here from Riley so I didn't really know anybody outside friends in school. But I put them in activities so they can be able to socialize and get those skills early on. Competition [inaudible], dance, gymnastics, the basketball, baseball, football. They got football [inaudible].

So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

We live in that neighborhood. So that was their home school. So that's how we can afford to [inaudible] school. We're actually looking for another house and I plan to keep them at that school, I just have to drive them there.

So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

I'm a social worker. So I've had to deal with other patients, clients that were of a different language. It is a barrier if you don't know the language. We have interpreters but for them, they're learning now, they'll be able to kind of interpret for themselves. Sometimes second-hand information can get [inaudible] when someone else is interpreting it for you or it could be a bit [inaudible] easier if you're explaining something to somebody in their language.

Okay. So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language?

I don't really have any feelings towards it. We all have different languages and that's their language.

So please use three words to describe your child's or your children's school experience at [inaudible]. Is it exciting or?

I was going to say fun but I didn't want to just say fun. Fun. Because you have fun when going to school. When they can go to school, Wednesday, Thursday. They wanted to go to school. So [inaudible] fun, enjoyable for them. They enjoy school. I can't think of the word I was trying to say but they are able to learn new things. Not all schools has this. Not all schools does this. And from my hometown, they don't offer this program. Oh my God, I can't think of the word I'm trying to say but it's reachable for them. They are able to--I can't put that into one more [inaudible] word. Different.

And so what would you tell interested parents about this school?

I like [inaudible], the program is awesome all the teachers that I've encountered seems to like [inaudible]. I know a lot of teachers in our room like their job. Because it's a challenging job in the teacher. But everybody that interacted with--

every teacher that interacted with my kids, seems to enjoy their job. They have a Spanish [inaudible] too, don't they, working at school. So they get their additional education or [inaudible] for the language, because I don't know the language. So okay, great interaction. It's a great school.

This concludes our Session 3. October 13. Dual-Language Immersion Research. Dual-Language Immersion Study. Session 4. October 13. Okay. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

Since we are a technically, a traveling family, and I know that language is a big part of my family, in general. And I know that no immediate languages that pushes the educational system as well as Spanish. Different job venues, as you get older, like I found that it will be best for them. For [inaudible] and [inaudible] as well as any more, like their siblings. And if we have more children, me and my husband. And I want them to have better career as they get older. Because for me, being able to speak Spanish, speak Hebrew, that's good and to have more variety, because I have another sibling, speaks five languages. So I want them to be able to expand on languages because they might want to go abroad and learn more and more things, and go see other countries, though maybe [inaudible] or something. So it's just I wanted them to be able to want to expand more in learning different cultures and learning different ethnic backgrounds, like just being more open to the world around, the way that I am with others around me.

So what was your own school experience like?

I enjoyed school. I was a straight student. School was fun for me. I was a great athlete. [inaudible] was in the library, if I was in the library.

Do you think your own school experience influenced your decisions to send your child to this program?

Yes.

So what are your expectations of this last program?

To further make my children want to expand on languages. And further push them into want to get to know others. Work on their people skills.

So what educational goals do you have for your child or children?

I just want them to-- want us to see and want to be more open. I don't want them to be secluded in life. I want them to want to be extremely open. I don't want them to be the basic. I want to sit at home all the [inaudible] and play games. I want them to be out there and want to go abroad and do fun things.

So where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

Me and the school. So they see us being more [inaudible], they don't want to do the same things. Because me and husband, my husband is from Peru. So they [inaudible] and the [inaudible]. They have the giant [inaudible]. It makes [inaudible]. Like they know, hey, we tried different dishes, we create different things in the kitchen. We do such things with them. So it's like, hey we have all this

things [inaudible]. Later on in life, we are going to want to travel and do things so we can know more about our ethnic backgrounds and see more are and probably want to meet other people from different countries who are here.

So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Because since being America itself is like that's a big thing, we have a large Hispanic base here as well as our Indian who is growing out here, the black and Hispanic quota is big. So it's like I just feel like that's just a major thing that we do need to expand from the kids learning how to speak Spanish because we have a wide variety of Latin Americans here. So it's best within the learning they speak Spanish because that's the majority of people who are in America at the moment. So they're going to have to learn Chinese at one point, they're going to have to learn German and all those different things. But it's like we need to focus on what's the large quantity of people who are here. So it's like, why not learning Spanish? Because I mean, we do have Japanese and we do have Chinese people here but that does seem to be the main focus, that it seems to be the main focus for our Hispanic Americans who are here.

So what context or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

We mainly had grown up with our Latin American friends here whether they're Colombian, Cuban, Porto Rican, it doesn't matter, we just all grown up together. So it's like we've been able to mix in together and have classes together and grow together, so it's just been-- it's been easier growing up with them and mingle in together. So it makes-- it makes us want to learn each other's language. For me, it was easy to just group in with them because with mom being Jewish and Cuban, it was just like we already knew Spanish. So it was like me with them it was like, "Oh, yeah. I speak Spanish."

So what are your feelings towards the Spanish language?

It's a romantic language, it's fun. I open up with things it's very loving. I've wanted soon as we've opened up with the Latin American people everything is all based around love. There's a lot of kissing and hugging and [walking?] into family, everything is food-based. It's just all about family orientation. It's the same with African American everything's about love. [inaudible] together.

So use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Which child?

Any of them. How many children do you have in the program?

Fun, Happy, Optimistic. I think [inaudible] I think [inaudible] needs to be in [inaudible] basically, yeah. [Then I'm Brazilian?] and [inaudible] and he started it [actually?]. [Amry?], he actually loved it, he loves the souvenirs, he loves the program and he messed with it very well. He's happy, he has friends already. He's very active, he's very optimistic and he just-- it's just fun all around for him.

And what would you tell interested parents about this school?

I would tell them for [inaudible] in general, I'd say [inaudible] for grade level. This is a top-notch school and program to prepare children for their futures. For the fact that ya'll have this language thing going on that's a plus because I don't see our school really doing [anything?] they need to because language is a very big part of what our country is at so it's like everyone has to hop on to it so that's a big-- that's a plus in itself. And the fact that it's a-- I just feel it's a top-notch school. I would give it the [points?]. I think every parent should probably enroll in their children into [inaudible]. I've liked it, and I came from Florida. I was raised in [inaudible], North Carolina, [inaudible] for like nine years. It's just being back and enrolling my kid in [inaudible], I'm very happy with what I've seen since March, and I am pleased with the services. I am pleased with how active you are with the kids, and how they keep in touch with the parents, and how well it's been going. I'm happy with the school and their services.

Save. All right. So this concludes session four, October 13th Dual Language Emergent Research. Dual Language Emergent Study session five October 13th. Okay. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

Just [inaudible] for her to learn a different language.

So what was your own experience in school like?

It's okay, I guess.

Okay. Do you think your own schooling experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

I would say no.

So what are your expectations of this school and the Splash program?

Expectations of this school. I don't know. Teach her I guess what they supposed to be learning in kindergarten and the language.

Okay. And so what educational goals do you have for your child?

I don't know. To learn. Grow.

Okay. And just be proficient in all the academic areas that the school offers. Okay. And so where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills?

Me and the school. I guess, just pretty much communicating with her. Talking to her and following what the teacher and then is teaching her in school.

Okay. So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Well, she learned in that school. And then last year when she was in Pre-K, they told me about the Spanish Emergent was a good program, so I just wanted to try it out.

Okay. And so what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language, which is the Spanish language, and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program?

Nothing other than when I took Spanish in high school.

Okay. And so what were your feelings for the Spanish language? How do you feel about that language?

It was all right. It was just something new. Different.

If you can use three words to describe your child's school experience so far in the Splash program.

Exciting, fun, and I don't know. I guess enjoyable. She act like she enjoy it.

Okay. And so what would you tell interested parents about this school?

It's a good school. I like that they offer those extra, I guess, them extra programs like that.

Is there any additional information you'd like to give today?

No.

End of session five. October 13th Dual Language Emergent Study.



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I know there's about half and half native speakers. Well you [can?] say "native" because parents have that background. But not the kids necessarily.

Mm-hmm. I'm just going to put this here.

Mm-hmm. Sure.

So before we get--well we can go ahead and get started with the questions and then if there's other questions that may come up, we can certainly interchange those and I'll just write those questions down and we will proceed with the interview. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

Thank you. Wanted a bagel.

Oh okay, thank you. Did you want a bagel? You can have some of that bagel Mama likes cream cheese.

She can have it.

She can have it?

Yeah. So what made you decide to enroll your child in the program.

Well I thought it was a good opportunity for her to get more chance to hear the language. Because we do speak it at home, I want to say for the most part, but I also--I would say half and half. We speak half Spanish, half English at home. So I wanted her to be able to maybe learn a little more from someone else that can actually go into grammar or the correct way of speaking all around. Having other students who are excited about learning the language as well. So that's why I enrolled her. And I enrolled her since first grade, so the program has been--she's been in that up to now.

Up until--okay. So what grade is your daughter in now?

She's in fourth grade.

Fourth grade.

Mommy in kindergarden.

In SPLASH?

Uh-huh.

I don't remember [anything?] having SPLASH.

I had Teacher Name and Teacher Name.

Oh you're right. It was since kindergarden, sorry. [laughter] I'm glad you're here to remind me.

[laughter] So what was your own school experience like?

Well mine was very different because I came not knowing any English. So I was enrolled in school in third grade--well fourth grade, really. Because I think there was about two weeks left of third grade when I was enrolled in school. And I didn't speak any English at all. And at that time, there weren't any programs like ESL that I know came after, like way after. So my experience was challenging, to learn English. Because there wasn't many programs that kind of immerse both--it was just English, completely. So with time, when I learned it--when I picked up the language I just knew it was important and I wanted her to be able to have both as well.

Do you think your own schooling experience influenced your decision to send your child to this school?

Oh yeah. Yes, like I said I wanted her to have that chance to--because like I said it's different. It's hard to explain because even though we speak it at home, I think for her--or I've seen in other homes and other parents tell me it's hard. They see it as a task. Like, "Why do I have to--if English is what's spoken here, why do I have to learn Spanish? Or another language?" But as a parent, we already--we've seen the benefits of that. So we're trying to make it as fun as possible. Not just at home, but hopefully at school they can have fun with learning that as well.

Okay. So what are your [inaudible] of the school and the program at [Call Labor?].

Well, one of my concerns, I guess, at first was how much would eventually-- when they get EOGs and all of that, I was a little concerned about how having Spanish take up half of the curriculum itself if it could hurt-- impact EOG grades or anything like that, but it hasn't. And I think I'm very pleased with the program. I wish you would continue even further like middle school. I know that's not available right now, but I'm very pleased with it how she's very excited in having that diversity like with her teachers, even. She's had a teacher from Chile, she's had a teacher from Colombia and they get to learn not just the language but a little bit about the teacher's country, and I've seen how the kids get excited about learning. I think her teacher went-- they go back to their country like during Christmas break or something. Sometimes they'll come back with stories like I got to visit my home country and we celebrated this way. And just for them learning that, I get to hear it at home so I'm sure it's exciting for them to hear it at school.

[inaudible].

So what educational goals do you have for your child?

Well, I just want her to be successful, and it's been my concern at first, was this going to hurt somehow the EOGs but she's been doing really well in that area too,

and it's helped me because I could see how she's progressing in Spanish too.

So, where does the responsibility lie in teaching your child social skills? Where do you think-- whose responsibility do you think that is to teach her social skills?

Mine [laughter] and mine. I mean we try really hard at home to go over why that's important and even with us coming today, I had to answer a lot of questions. She was asking me why isn't anyone else. You don't have to do this but sometimes it helps. Research help for other things so that's why we're coming here today, and I feel like I want her to have that same thinking why it's important for us to be part of something. And I do think that school helps as well. Like, of course, it is my responsibility but I think I see how she's opened up a lot too.

Awesome. In terms of interacting with her peers and her peers of different cultures?

Yes.

So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of other language [inaudible]?

Well, just because Spanish is very-- it's spoken here in the US a lot. It's my native language and I would like for her to learn another language but Spanish was important for us for that reason because-- I mean jobs now, they benefit a lot from employees who know Spanish, all of that, so I think that's very important for her in the future. And even if it's not job-related like just volunteering somewhere she'll be able to help out someone who doesn't speak any English and to me, that's very important.

Yes. So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in this program? And in this case, the partner language would be English.

English?

Hm-mmm.

I'm sorry, I don't know if I understood that one.

So what contacts or experiences have you had with the partner language and culture prior to enrolling your child in the program?

I grew up trying to learn the culture because, like I said, being in fourth grade, it was very new to me so that was my experience. I was kind of in the opposite from where she's starting. I needed to learn not just language but the culture as well so that's been my entire experience up to now, and I'm still learning [laughter]. There's a lot of things I still don't know. There's a lot of words I mispronounce all the time.

So what were your feelings towards the Spanish language? And I know that's your primary language and your culture, but just further explaining your feelings toward your language and the culture.

I mean I think it's a language that's spoken all around the world; not just Mexico,

not just Central America, South America. You're just able to communicate with so many more people by learning this particular language. Like I said, I would like for her to learn a different language in the future but I think Spanish-- it is spoken also in Europe. Spain, you have other countries so that's why I feel it's important.

And so please use three words to describe your child's school experience.

Fun. I would also say it's been-- let's see, I'm trying to think. Help me off a bind there [laughter]. How would you describe your school experience?

Educational.

Educational [laughter]. Yeah, I mean they do a lot of interactive work at school and I would just say like new experiences. New experiences, definitely.

Okay. So fun, educational, and new experiences?

Yes.

Okay. So what would you tell interested parents about this school?

This particular school? Oh, we love our school. We love our principal, our teachers. Everyone's very kind. They make everything really fun for the kids. We would love for her-- Actually, my sister has a high school girl now. She went to Perth, and her other two girls go to Perth. She goes to Perth. And we are pretty close to other schools but we're fortunate in that we can choose where they can go and we chose Perth for that reason.

All right then do you have any additional information that you would like to lend to advising parents that are looking to choose educational programs for their children?

I would just say take the time and do some research just on--even if it's not--if they don't choose this particular program, Splash but other programs that offer other languages. I honestly, compared to other countries, I think we're a little behind on that because other countries it's almost a mandatory thing where children should be learning because they have the capability to do so. Their minds are just--they can think it out really, really fast.

Yeah. They're like sponges, especially at the younger ages.

Yes. Mm-hmm. So their countries have those requirements. For us, it's not a requirement but I think we can still get the benefit. So I would just say if they're hesitant, maybe do some research. And even for us, we thought about if we see that it's not really working now, we can just go back to the traditional way. That was four, five years ago. So it's still working for us. And like I said, I wish it was further into middle school, all of that. But I would just say, do your research. That way, you can have a more peace of mind about them enrolling in something like that. But I can really think it's a benefit.

Well, thank you so much for taking the time to interview today for the DLI, Dual Language Immersion program dissertation study. Study conducted at Elementary School in North Carolina. This ends session number one. Okay. So I have started

recording for session two. It is 11:13 on October 6th, 2018. And so what grade is your son in?

Second grade.

Second grade. Okay. All right. I'm going to ask you 11 questions about the Dual Language Immersion program in [inaudible]. So what made you decide to enroll your child in this program?

Because I think it is very important for him to speak two languages. I think it opens doors and it makes that he grow.

Okay. So what was your own experience in school like when you were growing up?

I'm very happy about this program. I think it helps. Our language is Spanish. And I think he speaks really good, sometimes much better than I do. Because they use really good words and I really like it. I really like it.

So when you were growing up, how was your school? What was your school like when you were growing up?

Say again.

Did you go to school in America or did you go to school--

Here in America.

In America? So how was that experience in learning the English language?

For me it was hard. For me it was--English was hard. It's still be a little bit. Yeah, but I never told that it was as important as I think now. Yeah, it's-- I don't know.

So do you think that your own school experience influenced your decision to enroll your child in the Splash program?

No. I just want that he take as much as he can and I think that if he learn another language or more than two-- or more than one it is real good for him. I just want he to be good.

So what are your expectations for the school, or for the Splash program?

My expectations. First I would like he to enjoy. I would like he to learn at the same time as English. Spanish and English. And if he do it I feel like it's not going to be a big deal for him then to learn another language.

So what educational goals do you have for your child?

I would like him to-- I would like see him with a profession.

A profession? Okay. To have a good job. Have a good profession.

Yeah. Something that he loves but something--

He has something big. Yes. So where do you believe the responsibility lies in

teaching your child social skills?

Say again?

So whose responsibility do you believe it is for your child to learn how to be social with other people?

First I think mine. My responsibility because I have to talk to him how he can-- it's my responsibility but I think it's like team. It could be like team, right? Like I try to say something to him like if I would like he to make a good attitude. But I think he's going to have a good attitude at the same time as I talk to him. First I should have that attitude and then he's going to have as good one as I have. I think so.

Okay. So why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

Say again?

So why did you choose the Splash program that teaches the students Spanish English instead of choosing a different program like French or German or Mandarin. So why did you choose the Spanish dual language and merging program?

At the first, I didn't choose 'cause it was the school that it

That he attended?

Yeah.

Okay.

That, when I knew about this program, I was so happy 'cause he didn't speak almost any English. So at home, we speak Spanish and I always was worried about that him speak good Spanish 'cause I know he's going to learn English when in America. So he is going to learn it as he is going to school. So, first I said, "If he speak good Spanish, he's going to learn English."

Then, when we came to school and I knew that it was a program, the program, I was happy 'cause I knew that it was not going to be too difficult for him, 'cause he just spoke Spanish, and now if he speaks Spanish and English it's not going to be a- Like he could formulate, I think, that's what I thought.

Yeah.

And then I think when he have those two languages, then he want to learn one more, it could be good for citing though tomorrow. For me that I speak Spanish, I think those are the more important now.

Agreed. Okay.

I don't speak very good English so I hope that-

I think someone's looking for you. Is that one of the

I don't know.

I don't speak very good English so I hope you understand what I say.

Hi, are you looking for the- Oh no, no. Oh, okay.

Sorry about that.

It's okay. Okay, so again, why did you choose a school that teaches Spanish instead of another language?

I said at the first it's because it is the school that he-

Oh, yeah, that he attended.

Yes.

So, what contact or experiences have you had with the English language and culture prior to enrolling your child in the program? So how much exposure have you had to, you know, the culture of English before enrolling your child into the Spanish program?

Before my son attended the program?

Yes.

I had and he goes, "He's the big one." So I haven't any experience because it's their first time he came to school.

Okay. Oh, no. So he was in the program since kindergarten?

No. Yeah. Kindergarten.

Okay. So what are your feelings toward the Spanish language? How do you feel about the Spanish language?

Yeah. Again, it is our language so when he came to the Splash program for me it was good idea because he could combine both. And for him, it could be easier to learn English if he combine like if--

He combined both languages?

Yes.

So use three words to describe your child's school experience with the Splash program.

Satisfactory. And I think he enjoy. And I like how the teachers-- how they teach them. I like the teachers.

And so what do you-- what would you tell interested parents about this school?

I think it the best idea because now we don't see but I think in the future it is going to open the doors to our kids. I think it's the best present that we can give to them.

Awesome. So do you have further information that can [lend?] to the families

looking to choose good programs or innovative programs to educate their child?  
Do you have any further comments about that for parents?

Yeah. Sometimes I tell friends or family the program that is attending my son and they were like they're really interested [inaudible]. They're like, "Really?" And I said, "Yeah." And I think it's very good because they see how my son speak both languages and they think that it sounds very clearly. So actually when I go to my-- when they have something at the end of the year and they have to sing or make some presentation, I feel so happy when I see American kids speaking Spanish, and it sounds so clearly. I can't believe that that is not their first language.

Yeah. It's [inaudible]. So well, thank you so much for taking the time out to allow me to interview you today. This is very valuable to my study and I appreciate you coming out to share your time with me.

Thank you.

You're welcome. So